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THE

HISTORY OF A MAN.

EDITED BY

GEORGE GILFILLAN.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

At the close of the last chapter, I have specified the objects and aims which I have sought in the following volume. Although, formally, in many parts fictitious, the quality by which I hope it will be found peculiarly distinguished, is—fearless truthfulness; and being a book of this pretension, I anticipate not a little criticism, and, perhaps, detraction or abuse. Every "man," however, worthy of that name, and whose "history" deserves to be written, learns, in the course of his experience, to rate these things at their true value; and so, I trust, has the author of these pages. As the history, however, of an enthusiastic votary of literature, and as replete with sketches of and conversations with literary men of eminence, it will, I believe, be found interesting to one class; as containing many pictures of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland, to another; as filled with little incidents, and, here and there, with fresh characters, to another; as casting some light upon two different modes of intellectual and moral life—the literary and the clerical—and forming a *vade mecum* to young aspirants

in both, to another; as a record of spiritual struggle, and, in some measure, of spiritual victory, to another; and as pointing, ever and anon, to the cheering rays of the "Coming Glory" of the Church of Christ, to another. Whether the writer has been able to interpose, by means of the interest of his own personal story, or by the idiosyncrasy of his own style, a thread of *unity* through these various materials,—is a different question, and one about which, sooth to say, he is considerably careless. In writing it, and especially the latter portion of it, he had higher objects in view than to manifest either the skill of the artist or the power of the poet.

B. E.

March 5, 1856.

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THE

HISTORY OF A MAN.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND EARLY YOUTH.

How simple the announcement, such a person was born at such a day and such an hour; and yet how significant and solemn the statement! What comparison between the birth of a sun—a vast mass of mere light, heat, and perishable matter—and the birth of a being who can weigh, measure, love, laugh at, adore, or despise that orb,—kiss his hand and worship, or cry, "Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams!" and who is to survive the proud luminary, and to return one day the smile shed by the Day-star on his death-bed and grave, and shall see *him* snatched from his sphere while holding on his own immortal journey! What a key-note is struck when the tidings are told, "Behold, there is a man-child brought forth,"—a key-note which is to ring and reverberate through eternal ages! This thought is very seldom in men's minds, when they hear of or witness a birth. They see only the poor paltry threescore and ten years of mortal life that are to follow, and not the awful roll of cycles of innumerable centuries! Perhaps men never feel less, or are less certain of the immortality of the soul, than when they watch the puny creature as it enters the stage, "wawling"

and shrinking from the chill air of an inhospitable world. "*That* child live for ever?—that poor shrunken worm become a winged angel?" Besides, the fact of birth is so common, that to many it loses all its charm, and all its poetic interest. While parents, in general, think too much of their offspring, and act and speak as if they were the creators of the spirits as well as the begetters of the bodies of their children; and, to use the quaint language of a friend long since dead, dress up their young sinners, and bring them to be baptized, as if they were newly-arrived angels, many people go to the other extreme, and are apt to pooh the baby, and to wonder what parents see about their brats, and why *they* should be expected to kiss and fondle them. To me a child has always had a deeper significance; and I have always regarded it with a warmer interest,—not, indeed, looking on it as an angel, but as a candidate for a life higher than the angelic, or for one lower than the demoniac,—a drop of dew, destined either to be exhaled by the sun of heaven, or to be mixed with that miry stream which flows through this world down to the chambers of death; and have felt this thought invest a cradle with greater grandeur and an interest far more thrilling and profound than, I repeat it, had I seen a sun struggling up through chaos and fire-mist toward its finished and orbed magnificence.

With what emotions *my* birth was regarded, I know not; but at all events I was born on the 30th of January, 181–. A little girl of four, whom I know right well, was lately overheard by her father soliloquizing thus to herself about a younger brother, whose pet name was Dirrley: "There'll, may be, be more Dirrleys yet; but *I'm born*, at any rate—yes, I'm born!" She felt this to be a great fact, and that no succeeding arrivals could interfere with the truth that *she* had come upon the stage,—had got and was to keep the start. It was the queerest assertion of individuality and independence I ever heard of. So I, on a Saturday morning, in the depth of winter, received the unalterable honours of birth. My

father was a parish minister, on the border of the Morayshire Highlands. The parish was an extensive, but a hilly and poor one. The stipend was small, and his family was large. And yet, although I came as one more hungry mouth to a poor household, I have no doubt—although, as aforesaid, I do not know—that I was welcomed with considerable gladness. The place where I was born had some peculiar advantages. It lay on the very verge of the Highlands. One result of this was, that it brought the manners of two different tribes into contact and contrast, and suggested comparisons interesting to a philosophic mind. Another advantage, of which I never availed myself, was the ease with which Gaelic, as well as English, might be mastered in a parish which was one half Highland, and where my father, although born in the Lowlands, had been compelled to learn, in order to preach Erse one part of each Sabbath. The third advantage lay in the extreme seclusion of the spot, and in the great simplicity of manners which prevailed. But the chief charm of the region was its romantic scenery. Sir Walter Scott has remarked that the finest scenery of Scotland is found at those points where the mountains sink down upon the Lowlands, and where the grandeurs of the hill-country are at once contrasted and harmonized with the beauties of the more cultivated tracts. This was quite the character of my native parish. A fine level plain had, a poet would say, lain down at the feet of rough gigantic hills, to wonder at their bold sublimity, and to repose in their deep shade. Rich woods here and there, more daring, had run half-way up toward the rocky summits, and there had paused, as if in timidity. At one point, from a deep cleft in a wooded hill, came down a roaring cataract, storming, as it passed, with the black crags, which in vain sought to confine it, but gradually softening when it approached a lovely village, the edge of which it at last kissed—like a lion who, having warred with and torn his keeper, comes, and in remorse kisses the feet of his fair daughter. The

village, indeed, might be called the loved of the streams, since on each of its sides there was one to lave it, and murmur in its ear sweet inarticulate names of tenderness and of praise. With more distant and dignified regards the bold, dark mountains looked down upon it over their woods.

Above the cleft and the cataract, and a sea of woodland between, towered up an insulated crag, commanding a prospect in which luxuriance and naked loftiness, beauty and the barren pomp of solitude, were exquisitely combined. As seen from this eminence, the valley, with all its streams, lay northward, with the village on its southern edge. To the south were two enormous mountains, each 3,000 feet in height, but both as lumpish as they were lofty, and separated from the central crag by a wide green glen, down which you saw the river stealing slowly, to the "great agony" of the waterfall. Immediately below, from a two-sided valley of woods, came up the eternal cry of the cataract, mitigated in the summer solstice; but in winter, when the channel was full of water, loud and outrageous as the voice of a demon newly plunged into Tartarus. To the north-west were steep, grim, conical hills, with the air of haughty dethroned princes; and, indeed, the "crown *had* fallen from their heads,"—the crown of volcanic fire which they had worn in the days of other years. Straight west, a long valley went up through an avenue of stately hills, to greet a lake, lying in placid loveliness at the end.

Beautiful at all times was this scene to me—after, at least, I had learnt to interpret its language, and to feel what it hinted to the inward eye of the soul; but most so in two of its aspects. One was, when the wing of the thunder-cloud came down upon it, and when, as you stood on the summit, a large lowering mountain, closely adjacent, seemed all of a smoke—ran, like another Sinai, with rills of fire, cutting and carolling around its dark sides, and rang as with the noise of a hundred chariots, careering along precipices "where mortal

horsemen ne'er might ride." I saw it thus only once; but my companion and I, instead of trembling, felt the glow and thrill of that terrible sublimity which is the mere shadow of the passing God. It was finer still to come up to this eminence on an autumn twilight, while the moon, amidst thin fleecy clouds, at one time hid her beams, and left the hues of evening to die away unaided into night, through which the cataract seemed to lift up suddenly a louder and loosened voice, as if, like a wild beast, it loved to cry amidst the darkness, and again gleamed forth with a startling gush of light, in which the mountain-tops, the valleys, and especially the cones of the blue-green pine-trees, shone out with a distinctness, a nearness, and a depth of tone, which were in their effect almost unearthly. It was fine, too, to send the imagination away under the night canopy, and to find comparisons and similitudes for the genius of favourite poets in the sights and sounds around us;—the cataract, with its muffled roar and sullen plaint, being an emblem of Byron; the fat, fair valley, winding along its winding stream, representing Thomson of the Seasons; the proud peak of Ben Ample looking on over the rest, while overtopping them all, reminding us of Milton; the two large lumpish mountains to the south-east suggesting the breadth, height, and heaviness of Wordsworth and Southey; that semi-Sinai, along which I had seen the lightning running like the streams which succeed a waterspout, but over which there now lay a scarf of bright mist, figuring Coleridge or Shelley; and the whole, in its combination of the soft and strong, the passionate and the calm, the dazzling and the dim, the profound and the lofty, composing a mighty image, carved on mountains, and coloured by moonlight, of Shakspere himself!

These were after-thoughts and imaginations. Long ere I could at all appreciate the beauty, or feel the power of scenery, other influences had begun to develop my mental powers. One of the principal of these was frequent intercourse with my father. It so happened that my five elder

brothers had all left our home, long before I was born,—one to be a soldier (very much to the grief of both his parents); another to the sea; a third to the ministry of the Scottish Church in a remote province; a fourth to America, as a daring explorer of the Western woods; and a fifth to be a clerk in a Manchester warehouse. There were, besides, several sisters, but they were much engaged in domestic matters; and two of them, shortly after my birth, were removed—one by marriage, and the other by death. My mother was greatly occupied in her own sphere. It became thus inevitable that I should be left a good deal alone in the house, and should resort much to my father's company, who was, besides, very partial to me. Never shall I forget that sweetest intercourse! He was a man eminent for his piety, natural eloquence, and general information. He had been, however, rather hurriedly and imperfectly educated; and his scholarship was not so remarkable as his other qualities. Hence he could not ground me well in the Latin or Greek tongues, or the sciences; and I feel this to the present hour. But he taught me what was of still more importance. He instructed me in the general facts of history; he recounted anecdotes of the great and good of other days; he pointed out to me the prominent features of the landscape, and taught me to admire them; he directed my readings, and he sought to impress on me the fear and the love of God. The most delightful hours I spent with him were when he took me to accompany his walks. His manse—a thing not usual in coüntry parish manses—lay a little distance from his garden, along the river-bank. Between that garden and house was his favourite walk; and as I accompanied him there, I derived more pleasure, and more solid information too, in an hour or two, than from days of my ordinary teachers, or of my solitary studies. Now he asked questions which at once drew out, and riveted in my mind, the knowledge I already had. Now he encouraged me to ask questions of him; now he stooped over a flower, and told me something about its con-

struction, or repeated the famous story of Beattie and the cresses. Now his eye caught a cloud, and straightway his fine, simple fancy—a fancy resembling, in some points, that of Addison—was stirred, and his soaring was as beautiful as it was brief: he rose on doves', if not on eagles', wings. Now he expatiated on some author of genius, such as Milton, Johnson, or Cowper; and his criticisms, if not subtle and refined, were glowing and generous: and now he told me anecdotes of his early struggles and College career, of which I remember little but a general impression of their interest, and the genial humour in which some of them were enshrined. Besides being often with him in his walks, I was often with him in his study. The window of that room looked out upon the fields and hills, "having a look southward, and being open to the whole noon of Nature;" and near that window my father's desk was sure to be placed. His books were collected in a little recess, in a corner of the room; and there I was generally found seated on a stool, and poring over a book to the tune of my father's pen diligently racing over the page, and sometimes of his voice, asking me to consult a volume, or supply a date. The books were—for the time, and the wilds of Morayshire—counted a capital collection. They amounted to six or seven hundred volumes, and were arranged on their shelves according to a definite principle. At the bottom, and forming the base of the library, were the large old folios—Charnock, Flavel, Matthew Henry, and Poole's Synopsis; the four enormous tomes of which last were adorned with rough cuts of the Ark, Solomon's Temple, the Tabernacle, and other Scriptural edifices, quaint enough in execution and design, but, to a young eye, exceedingly attractive. On the next shelf appeared the quartos, some of them in the old wooden bindings, and with clasps of brass, including such books as Turretin's Opera Omnia, Calvin's Institutes, Anderson's Defence of Presbyterian Government, and Gale's Court of the Gentiles. Higher up were the octavos, dim and dusky, many of them

in their binding,—such as Owen's Meditations on the Glory of Christ, Edwards on the Freedom of the Will, and long rows of the Edinburgh Christian Instructor and the Christian Observer. In the next shelf were the duodecimos,—the Spectator, the Rambler, Milton's Paradise Lost, and Thomson's Seasons. And highest of all were the "small infantry;" consisting of Butler's Hudibras, the lesser Classics (such as Flovus and Terence), two thick little copies of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, and many more of the same *infra* size. On the floor, and on some separate little shelves, were innumerable pamphlets, tracts, and odd numbers of old magazines.

What joys I had in that little library! It was specially luxurious, when rain kept me from my delightful solitary wanderings and reveries, to take refuge there for a long summer's day. Never did time pass more swiftly. Now I devoured a pamphlet at a gulp; now I lingered more fondly over a favourite poem, or an essay in Addison's Guardian; now I dipped into a controversial treatise; and now I dared to attack one of the "huge armfuls" of Theology, and forgot the whole world, while spelling out, with a little difficulty indeed, passages in Calvin's or Turretin's Latin, or glancing more eagerly at some of the massive pages of Donne's Sermons, Fox's Book of Martyrs, or Dupin's Ecclesiastical History. With all the appetite of youth, I yet heard the summons to dinner with a sigh; and after, like Dominie Samson, bolting my beef and broth, rushed back to my delightful readings again. Nor was it less pleasing to drop asleep for an hour over an author, and to be transported, in the visions of imaginative youth, to larger libraries, and to still fairer scenes than those around me, and when I awoke to "cry to dream again;" till, looking up, I saw that the rain was over and gone, and, walking forth, beheld the farewell evening gleam of the sun, diffused, like magic upon sorcery, over the features of that matchless landscape; and found that converse with the soul of books had but qualified

me more to enjoy communion with the soul of Nature; and this because the soul of each, and the link uniting both, was poetry.

At school I learned comparatively little; and although I generally had my lessons as well as any of my class-mates, I took less delight in Cornelius Nepos, or Mair's Introduction, than I did in weaving long yarns, and recounting them across the table to my companions. Not Sir Walter Scott, nor Hartley Coleridge, I verily believe, ever indulged more in the practice of story-telling. The romances I daily constructed were endless. They were spun out of my brain with the utmost ease, and I have often since wondered that I did not turn out, in after days, as inveterate a novel-writer as I have been a novel-reader, and that almost the first tale I have ever told in print is this story of my own life. Besides boring all my co-mates with these narratives of robbers, witches, smugglers, genii, and so forth, I fell into a habit of composing them internally, for whole days together. I had begun the cognate practice of day-dreaming long before. There was a puddle near my father's house, overhung with nettles and weeds, which, when I was a mere child of five, was a favourite haunt of mine. I hung over it for hours, and peopled it and its dirty shores with imaginary beings and fictitious incidents. It was an Atlantic to me, that puddle. And how often have I retired voluntarily, yet not sulkily, from companions whom I loved, and sports which I deeply relished, to my own musings in the silent autumn fields between the hedges, to a stealthy brook near the house, overhung with trees, and choked with sedge, or to the willows by the watercourses of the river! I have carried my book there, and revelled uncounted hours, sighing, or weeping, or smiling in secret over its pages. I passed my time sometimes still more sweetly alone, with no book, chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy, going through imaginary adventures, carving out a hundred different plans of life, projecting literary works, making verses, generally *à la* Hudibras,

timing my thoughts always to the motions of a *large stick* which I carried with me to my solitude, speaking to myself aloud, and not unfrequently, like Mirza, "overheard in my soliloquies," and bearing the shame accordingly in blushes, which yet rekindle at the thought. The consequence was, as with Edwin, in the Minstrel—

> "The neighbours shook their heads, yet bless'd the lad;
> Some deem'd me wondrous wise, and some did deem me mad."

A "*remote* laddie" was a frequent expression used by the worthy old wives, as they saw the "lone enthusiast" sitting silent for hours on the solitary stile, and gazing himself away at the mountains which were glowing in the afternoon sun, or heard him repeating to himself, with ardent cheek and burning eyes, passages from Ossian; or met him in a deep plantation, plunging as if pursued,—and he was pursued, by fancy as by fire,—farther and farther on into the woody wilderness. At that time my own thoughts were dearer to me than natural scenery,—I had little delight in it till my mind had been roused to a certain pitch; but whenever I reached the climax of one of my darling novels, or finished satisfactorily one of my internal compositions, I turned round and saw the mountains and the heavens in a new light, and felt, although as yet obscurely, that it was thy light, O Imagination, bride of my being! Yes, Imagination, thou hast been at once the angel and the demon of my existence, and still thy fairy hands are spreading their gauzy veil between me and the universe, and I may almost say with Schiller, "the Beautiful still is the God of the Earth!" When thy torch ceases to burn, and to show me all things from the sun to my own shadow, let my earthly life too expire, for hitherto I have fed on phantasy, and with any coarser pabulum cannot away!

I remember, as one of the principal eras in my intellectual life, my introduction to the Waverley Novels. This was in my tenth year. Previous to that period, Ossian, Addison,

and Milton were my favourite authors in Belles Lettres, and large passages from them had indented themselves on my memory. Of Shakspere, I had only read two or three plays—"Macbeth," and the "Merry Wives of Windsor." I had read, besides, an odd volume of Dryden's plays, including "Cleomenes," and "Amphitryon;" and some scattered comedies, such as "A Wonder—a Woman keeps a Secret," and the "Provoked Wife," constituted all the rest of my dramatic lore. Of novels, I had only read the Vicar of Wakefield, Joseph Andrews, Philip Quarles, Robinson Crusoe, and Evelina. In my circle, novels were looked upon as splendid sins, and it was by stealth that I had procured some even of the above. With the Pilgrim's Progress, indeed, I had been long permitted and urged to make acquaintance, and of it I had become passionately fond, to the point of fixing all its localities in a solitary road in the neighbourhood, and there travelling oft in imagination after its pilgrims. But when I was sent on a holiday excursion to a friend who lived in a distant town, I found in the library Sir Walter Scott's novels; and greedily, and with an ecstasy I cannot fully describe, did I enter, at the bidding of the magician, into that wondrous world of blended romance and reality. I had precisely the feeling which I experienced afterwards, when I found myself in the centre of a great evening city, with its crowds of human beings, revealed by lamps which seemed hanging from a sky of enchantment—all real men and women, but seemingly transfigured and glorified in an unearthly light. And then the scenery and the characters were Scotch! The light of transcendent genius had fallen suddenly on my own every-day walks, and the people I met in them. I felt at once carried back to my own valley, and borne away to a land beyond the wing of dreams. The first five I laid my hands on were the Monastery, Waverley, the Abbot, the Fortunes of Nigel, and Ivanhoe. The Monastery, reckoned by many the worst of the series, was the first I read; and hence I continue, I fear, to love it better than some

of his prouder and more popular fictions. I love still that lone valley of Glendearg, and that deeper and more haunted solitude of Corri-nan-shian—love to follow the Sub-Prior Eustace, with beating heart, down the wizard glen—to trace the desperate Halbert, rushing, like one possessed by the fiend, up the valley to invoke the White Lady—to see Henry Warden, coming like a spirit across the moors to meet him, more terrific in his loneliness than the White Lady in hers—to watch the twain stopping for breath on the ridges above the Castle of Avenel—or starting as Christie of the Clinthill shakes his ashen lance over them—or witnessing the graphic but brutal scene between Julian and his paramour. I bow my head before the sorrows of the broken-hearted Edward—I tremble at the black brows of Moray—and thrill to the bone as I see Catherine trying to unloosen the visor of her seducer, dead on the battle-field, and hear her crying, "Christie of the Clinthill, Rowley, Hutcheon, ye were constant to him at the feast, but ye fled from him at the fray, false villains as ye are!" while a dying voice near exclaims, "Not I, by Heaven!" being Christie's own, and his last. I love even Piercie Shafton; and have a great regard for the Miller's daughter. This love and wonder I need not say were increased mightily as each new miracle of the series broke on me afterwards, at slow intervals; for the apparitions of Waverley Novels, after I returned to the manse, were few and far between. Some six months afterwards, I procured Rob Roy, which, when I was reading, my father gently took from me, and deposited in his desk. In a day or two, however, I surprised him with his desk half-open, devouring it as a sweet morsel in secret. He saw he was discovered, smiled—the dear old man!—and gave me it back to finish at my leisure. I remember also, the same summer, writing to a friend in a far off city, to send me Guy Mannering, by the carrier who reached our village each Saturday. The first evening the book did not arrive, and I returned home as full of the bitterness and blackness of

disappointment as I ever was in my life. The next Saturday night, I went with a beating heart to the carrier's; found, O joy! the parcel; tore it open; began to read, on the road, the first of the three small, dusky, crumbling volumes, and continued till interrupted by bed-time. The next day was the Sabbath, when no novels, of course, could be perused in a Presbyterian house; and my readers can conceive how I eyed, with fidgety impatience, the precious volumes which I durst not open—how I sighed and smacked my lips, and said for once, "When will the Sabbath be over!" and how on Monday, by earliest summer dawn, I was up and out with little Harry Bertram, amidst the sunny fields of Galloway. Many years elapsed ere I obtained my wish to read all the works of the Master, and many a wish I breathed in solitude, and in vain, for a complete set; and many a reprimand I got from true and tender lips for my excessive exultation when a stray volume did find its way to our dwelling; and not a few, as they saw me carrying it to a quiet nook to peruse, shook their heads, and entertained the sentiment, if they could not utter the words—

> "Of such materials wretched men are made;
> And such a truant boy will end in woe."

But I cared not. I cherished then, and cherish still, love to Scott as one of my first literary benefactors; and now regularly read over all his better novels—all, indeed, except Anne of Geierstein and Count Robert of Paris—once a year, and often regret that I had not the whole to begin anew, and that I had not enjoyed the luxury of reading more of the series "in life's morning march, when my bosom was young," to the murmur of the blue streams of my birthplace, and of the warm careering blood of my boyhood.

My readers must not, from the above little incident, imagine that I disregarded the Sabbath or its services. On the contrary, that was to me one of the happiest days of the week. After breakfast and prayers were over, my father retired to his study to prepare for his public work; and I,

lifting some pious volume, took it out to my favourite haunt, the little brook at the end of the park, stealing below its shade of trees, and whispering so softly in the ear of its bull-rushes, as if imploring a passage for its quiet waters to the near river. There I remember reading, for the first time, Graham's Sabbath (a copy that was presented by the author to my father, and bearing his autograph on the blank page), and perceiving, with rapture, the surpassing truth as well as beauty of the opening lines—

> "How still the morning of the hallow'd day!
> Mute is the voice of rural labour, hush'd
> The ploughboy's whistle and the milk-maid's song."

At eleven I returned to the house, and often accompanied my father to the church. I see yet his tall form, his hurrying step, and his eye, on other days so lively and mirthful, subdued and solemnized into deep seriousness, not untouched by a shade of anxiety. He was, it is true, adored by his people, and went to the pulpit, in general, thoroughly prepared. But he was now well advanced in age—about sixty—and had begun, although a strong man, to be haunted with the fear of dying suddenly, and of dying *in the pulpit*. He commenced, accordingly, the services with not a little trepidation, which disappeared, indeed, in the first duty of the day—a few opening remarks, or "preface," as it was called, to the psalm that was to be sung—but returned at the commencement of his prayer. Ere the close, however, his fervid spirit in its soarings had forgotten earth, death, man—all but Heaven and the Dread Dweller there. After prayer was ended, he seldom gave out another psalm, but commenced immediately his expository discourse. In exposition, however, unless the subject were historical, he did not shine till he came near the close, and began to grapple with the practical bearings of his theme. He had little logical faculty, seldom reasoned, brought out the meaning of obscure passages very indifferently, and neither could make, nor cared for, hair-splitting distinctions. But he

had a powerful memory, a lively fancy, and a deep, warm heart. He communed directly with the souls of his hearers, and seemed often like a man who saw the unquenchable fires, and the victims rushing toward them, and sought by cries and tears and gestures to arrest the fatal plunge. But mixed with this earnestness, and redeeming it from the appearance of fanaticism, were a certain *bonhomie* and a profusion of striking anecdotes and quaint remarks, which rendered his preaching a treat as great as his conversation; indeed, it was just his conversation produced and prolonged. There were, too, occasional bursts of fervid pathos, or of holy indignation, disturbing and elevating the surface of the stream of his speech; and, as I have observed in all earnest speakers, he never failed to *interest* his hearers.

It was fine to see the grey-plaided shepherd, with his dog at his feet; the kilted savage, who had come from a distant parish, and knew English but imperfectly; the ruddy ploughman; the old woman with her high coif and tartan plaid; the pale-cheeked and bald-headed weaver; the blooming maiden; and the little boy, many of whom would have slept under a Chalmers or an Irving—all suspended on the lips, and eager, earnest eye of this strong, simple man, speaking from the heart to the heart, determined as an ambassador from Christ to take no refusal and to brook no delay, and whose whole soul, in some of the paroxysms of eloquence which formed the application of his discourses, seemed poured out into the question, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" It was fine too, in a different way, when he preached Gaelic, to watch the effect produced by what in my ear was unintelligible, upon the people—to see their tears started by the combined power of what to me were an unknown tongue and a well-known eye; their hearts pierced and souls moved by the strange and mysterious union, as to me it necessarily appeared, of a clear natural and an obscure artificial speech: I saw the dancers and the weepers, but only half heard the music to which they were mourning and moving. The most

impressive part of the service, however, was at the end of the afternoon discourse, when the speaker, feeling the sword of death suspended over his own head, and knowing the uncertainty of the lives of his hearers, became peculiarly urgent in his appeals, as if he durst not stop till he had delivered fully his own soul, and "concluded" some of them, at least, into the fold of safety, ere he shut the Bible—it might be for ever—and uttered the "Amen" of the sermon—it might be the last. It was a proof, though a very subordinate one, of his power, that less frequently under him than under other preachers did I indulge my incorrigible habit of day-dreaming—a habit which occasionally set my wits a wool-gathering upon the mountains I saw through the windows, or embarked my fancy on the river that was sounding by.

The evening of the Sabbath was, if possible, more interesting than the day. The day to the preacher had been one of ardent and anxious labour; the evening was one of deep, delicious rest. His spirit had exhausted its fires, and had sunk into serenest tranquillity. At tea-time, when the family were all assembled, his smile, it struck me, had always on the Sabbath a peculiar tenderness and depth of parental love. It seemed many smiles meeting in one—a confluence of streams of love. After the simple meal was over, he retired to his study to pray and commend the word preached to his Master's blessing, and after that duty was over, to insert a paragraph in his diary recording the feelings, experiences, and gratitude of the day; to look out, perhaps, at the magnificence of nature around him, which seemed on Sabbath radiant with rest; or to read, with a relish which those only who have read after preaching can understand, some favourite author, perhaps Rutherford's Letters, or Halyburton's Memoirs, or Chalmers's Astronomical Sermons. Sometimes I took my book into a corner of the room, and read beside him; and sometimes I ran out to peruse the hieroglyphics of the sky as it faded over the mountains, and allowed the evening star and the moon to take their turn in looking down on the

lovely vale in which the rivers, now emboldened by the stillness, began their night concert of emulous praise to God.

At eight in the evening precisely, all the family and servants assembled to be catechized, and after that was over came the hour of my father's truest eloquence. He uniformly closed his questions by an extempore address to the little circle; an address remarkable for its point and pathos, often "piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," sounding every soul, touching every heart, stripping bare every conscience, and, as it went on, responded to by bursting tears. He seemed here a father anxious to take all his family to heaven with him, and unwilling to close till he had some assurance that they were in the right way. Oratory, poetry, genius, are words all too feeble to express the character of this kind of address. It was the mere heart of a Christian parent becoming a tongue and speaking, in yearning accents, to his nearest and dearest, and sounded like the echo of the voice of the Father in heaven. It was followed by family worship, and on that night the voice of psalms swelled out of deeper deeps of adoration, was mellowed into sweeter and richer melody, and rose nearer to the celestial city. The chapter read had a strange and holy charm, and the prayer seemed to know no intervening medium between the lips of the speaker and the Heavens of the Great Hearer of Prayer. A supper, frugal and temperate, but superior to the same meal on ordinary days, closed the well-spent Sabbath, and a humble but happy family lay down as one being, to dream of that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

It may probably appear to some that I am over-colouring the picture, and wishing to represent my father as perfect. He was very far from it, and no one knew his imperfections like himself. Often after his best displays he came in "humbled to the dust." "A poor weak worm," and similar expressions often escaped his lips. He was, shall I say? too good to be perfect, or to be even what Coleridge calls so admirably "a goody man." He was impetuous, irritable, impulsive,

and prevented only, as he often said, by grace from being the chief of sinners. His high animal spirits and ardent temperament sometimes hurried him to the borders of what was wrong, and very often beyond the borders of what was prudent. Slights and affronts, too, he keenly felt and warmly resented. He had learned to control his appetites and passions, but not his temper. But, apart from his piety and warm heart, he was the truest man I ever knew; he had "no guile." In understanding a man, he was in simplicity a child. A frank, open, large, he was also an enthusiastic nature. He admired many whom he knew he never could equal, as much as those whose heels he felt himself close upon. Resembling, as I said, the dove in her lower but lovely flights (we refer here solely to his fancy; in appearance, as a character and as a speaker he was masculine and robust), he was never weary of admiring the path of the cloud-cleaving eagles of genius. Indeed, his constant preference of bold, daring, and poetical writers led to this consequence in me, that in admiring them I almost learned to despise his own writings as compositions, while I liked them because they came from *him*. It was long afterwards ere I saw a merit and a beauty in their simplicities, which the age has not yet seen, nor probably ever shall. His writings, however, were no proper revelation of him. They showed his heart, his piety; they showed also his defects and limitations, but gave little idea of that felicitous something, that happy knack, that manly *naïveté*, that Bunyan-like charm, which characterised the living, moving, and speaking man.

I was just in time to witness, in his relation to his flock and to his neighbourhood, the old blessed power of priestcraft in Scotland, understanding by that word the, on the whole, legitimate influence of the pastor over his people. The elements of that power consisted of the deep yet dignified regards entertained by the minister for his flock, his assiduity in the discharge of his duties, his frank yet not familiar or too frequent intercourse with them, the *prestige* in favour of

the office which still prevailed, and the deep sense of religion which characterised many, at least, of the parishioners. Ministers then stood at precisely the proper angle to their flocks. They were neither rich nor poor, but inclining to be poor. They were neither servants nor lords, but verging towards lordship. They were neither indolent nor were they so hard wrought as they have since become, but their leisure was more conspicuous than their labour. They were not ignorant, but neither were they profoundly learned. They were among their people, although not of them, and in the feelings with which they were regarded, love and reverence mingled in nearly equal proportions. Their sermons were obeyed, not criticised; their auditors were not merely delighted, but they DID what their minister told them. Their faults were treated with indulgence, and their society welcomed, but not violently courted.

I sometimes likened the minister among his people, at least I do so on reflection now, to the parish kirk standing in the centre of the village, promoted on its knoll, and dignified, by its simple steeple, only to cast a kindlier shadow over the adjacent houses, and to shed on them a holy charm. The minister was then above his people merely by the height of those uplifted arms with which he now warned from sin, and now "allured to brighter worlds, and led the way." Beautiful and blissful were the results of this state of things to all parties. He had his trials, but he had them at home; they came from friends, not from cold-hearted strangers; they arose rather from accident than from design or ill-will, and he treated them as trifling acts of disobedience committed by children. To them again their pastor was always near, as a counsellor to advise, as a teacher to instruct, as a friend to feel for, as a being at once adored and loved, adored for his office, and loved for himself. I saw all this in its full glory, but I saw also evidences even then that it could not continue always, and that a new order of things, which would not permit that purely patriarchal relation between teachers and

taught, but substitute one more fluctuating and uncertain, was at hand. In some parts of Scotland the old feeling is, perhaps, existing still, but I fear that in most even of country parishes it is an exception.

I must not forget to allude in this chapter to my companions, to one or two of the characters in the village, and to a few miscellaneous reminiscences. My companions were not numerous nor very remarkable, nor did I contract any friendship of the David and Jonathan kind. But there were two or three with whom I either exchanged souls, or mingled in sports. One, Henry Thompson, was much older than I, had been at college, and had come home with a good addition to his knowledge, and a larger to his self-conceit. He had a clear, sharp, but common-place mind, and a ready logic and rough repartee, which secured him considerable power amongst the would-bes of the village, whom he rated at their true value, and exposed with much adroitness. He told me, although in a conceited, pragmatical way, some tidings from the world of literature, science, and theology, as represented in our universities; of Chalmers, his geniality, his eloquence, his occasional "darkness" of mood; and of Wilson, his gipsy adventures, and all that odd outside of the man which was then better known than his universal sympathies and golden genius. About the same time a copy of the "Lights and Shadows" reached our village, and I eagerly perused it, its glowing eloquence, pathos, and high-toned description producing an effect only inferior to that of the Scots novels. The "Sheiling" was particularly prized, and I transferred the picture of the thunderstorm in Glennevis, to a glen ten miles to the west of my native place, and ever since in fancy see its gloomy rage *there* storming, and there the little maid still wading the red-running streams, and fronting the lightnings, as she goes down the glen to find a priest for her dying grandsire.

In one thing I owed Henry Thompson a literary service. He taught me to abate my boyish reverence for Brougham,

and showed me how void of poetic fire and genial life, how cold even in its passion and forced in its fury, was his much-vaunted style. He tried, too, to turn me from being, like my father, a keen Whig, into a Tory, but here he failed. My feeling, ignorant, as of course in a measure it was, in favour of liberal opinions, was too deeply rooted, and had been fostered too carefully by my father to be at the mercy of a sneer. Nothing roused me at this period, and for long afterwards, more than the subject of politics. My young blood boiled, my face flushed, my whole being was convulsed, while (in my ignorance) defending Queen Caroline, or when abusing, more justly, Lord Castlereagh and George the Fourth. In my day-dreams I often fancied myself in Parliament, thundering on the opposition benches; and sometimes taking my stand on a pile of wood to the west of the Manse, I extemporised to a green field long harangues on the political questions of the day. At other times I retired to a lonely spot on a river about half a mile from our dwelling, where the stream, surrounded by strait and steep wooded banks, cuts its way, in a deep and narrow channel, through a rock, and after forcing the passage, dispreads luxuriously in a wide basin, where I used to bathe, and coming up from my plunge, stood on a projecting point above, and poured out orations as little liable to interruption as though I had been in the centre of Sahara, and disturbing none save the birds and squirrels, which were the only tenants of the solitude. Henry Thompson soon afterwards went abroad to Canada, where he still lives as the successful teacher of an academy. He came home about fifteen years ago for a few months, and gave me the impression of not being at all improved by contact with the manners of the west, his conceit having swollen into insolence, and his spirit of controversy and contradiction having become altogether intolerable.

William Hendry was another of the companions of my boyhood, although he was a year or two older than I. He was a farmer's son in the neighbourhood, and began Latin off

the same grammar and on the same day, with me. He was certainly a warm-hearted and cleverish lad, and had a considerable talent for languages; but he was careless, and wild, and this wildness very early blossomed into vice. He became afterwards a student at Aberdeen, where his riotous conduct ended in disgrace. He returned to the country a fallen lad, yet, loved for his good nature and frank bearing; obtained a situation as a banker's clerk in Elgin, which, however, he suddenly left for India, and was, I believe, drowned while bathing in a spree in the Ganges. Poor William Hendry, I think I see him still, creeping like a snail unwillingly to school in the morning—in the interval of school hours hurrying me and others away to the favourite "linn," where we plunged, swam, dived, and laughed for a full hour under the burning July sun, often racing ourselves dry afterwards upon the green banks or sands around, and in winter, careering in full pursuit of the foot-ball, and, after the game was over, drinking copious draughts of the cold water from the sunken well, till every fibre shivered with strong excitement. Always frank, buoyant, and full of mirth—peace to thy ashes and oblivion to thy sins!

John Anderson is another memorable name to me. He was a grown-up lad, working at a humble loom in the village. I liked him as a "fellow of infinite jest," well read in the light letters of that day, knowing in human nature, full of anecdote, and a visit to his shop ever and anon was a rare treat to me. He made me laugh till I was nigh falling on the floor with his comical stories, and listened with pleasure to what I had to tell him, in return, of my readings and youthful speculations. He was an expert fisher, and I sometimes accompanied him along the river side, less to watch the sport than to listen to his anecdotes. I liked, too, to sit down by the side of the clear running stream, as it reflected the green or wooded banks, and to muse and dream over the waters. I had sometimes a volume of Washington Irving with me, and as I read to the angler portions of it, he

smacked his lips, and said, "How I would like a day's fishing with him!" A curious incident transpired in this lad's history. He married privately the daughter of a small landed proprietor in the neighbourhood. She had attended a singing-school with him, and he had used his time well. They contrived to get married, and managed to conceal it for three or four years. At last it could no longer be hid, and her parents indignantly shut the door in her face. The pair left the place, and he was last heard of in the remote district of Galloway, supporting himself and his wife by teaching. I missed his departure much. He had a decided mimetic gift. I have heard of him attending Lykewakes,* and with the aid of whisky, which was copiously used on these occasions, keeping the assembly all night and morning in a roar of laughter. Indeed, wherever two or three were assembled, John Anderson was sure to be there, and his moonlight departure eclipsed the gaiety of the country side.

Andrew Fergusson was originally born among the glens where his father, a small landed proprietor, had died prematurely, leaving him the estate and a little money beside. His mother had married again, and he came to our neighbourhood to reside with an uncle, and to get his education at our village school. He was an erect, good looking youth, with a black eye, and a kindly disposition, although, like many highlanders, full of personal and family pride, deep prejudices, and not a little cunning. He lived in an old castle, situated on the verge of a romantic hollow, overhung by green hills, and commanding a wide prospect of the strath to the eastward. There I often spent my Saturday afternoons. In a room of the castle there was a library, which had belonged to one of his departed relatives, consisting chiefly of original or translated classics. This was a main attraction to me, although I should have preferred had the books been modern. But the mere words "a book,"

* *Lykewakes.* A custom, once prevalent in Scotland, of sitting up all night with the newly dead. See *Antiquary.*

"a new book," "a library," had then to me an ineffable charm. Fergusson and I once took an excursion to his native Highlands. I remember my rising at four on a glorious July morning, breakfasting at the castle, walking up Glenconochie, with its rich woods and sounding river below, and its wild-deer forest above, reaching at ten a little farm-house, where Fergusson was acquainted; taking a second and very substantial breakfast, renewing our journey through wild and lonely moors, coming to another farm-house, where a kind old man welcomed us to a hearty dinner, and sent us on our way rejoicing; and as the sun was westering, crossing the hill which concealed Loch Tarat, and clapping our hands for joy, when we saw it, quietly nestling under the frowning precipices of Ben-Alan. The next morning, early, our hostess, Fergusson's aunt, a mild, good-looking dark-eyed highland farmer's wife, awoke us, and after a rapid breakfast we climbed the lofty Ben, and found ourselves at ten, forenoon, on its summit, with a burning sun above us, with a wide prospect of lochs, mountains, and straths beneath us, and with the fiercest thirst I ever felt within us. We had taken no liquid of any kind with us, and there was no possibility of getting a single drop till we reached, on the other side, the bottom of the hill, where we found a stream lukewarm in the great heat, out of which we drank, and drank, and drank for a full half-hour, and arose very imperfectly refreshed. Wandering down Glenfirkin, a glen stretching on the west side of Ben-Alan, we met at a little bridge crossing the mountain-stream, a singular character,—a man, clad in brown shabby clothes, but with a striking face, and that indescribable something which marks the faded gentleman, and the fallen scholar. He turned out to be a person who, at Glasgow College, had once promised great things, taken high prizes, but got into dissipated habits, lost caste, and had wandered northward to these remote solitudes, where he lived, partly on the simple natives, and partly by raising subsidies from any chance stranger he might

meet visiting the scenery. He haunted this glen, which opened up to the celebrated Loch Donachar, like its evil genius, and with that quiet respectful impudence peculiar to his unhappy class, saluted every one bearing the appearance of a gentleman, entered into interesting conversation, volunteered some species of guideship, and seldom failed to extort a few shillings, or what he relished nearly as well, an invitation to the next inn. Us he approached, counting us raw boys; as soon as he found us to be school-boys, began talking on the scenery and on literary topics: spoke in the most insinuating and intelligent manner, and seemed determined to accompany us on our way to the Donachar Inn. He found out, when he heard my name, that he had been at College with an uncle of mine, whom he called a beautiful Grecian; and, in short, like Christian with Talkative, I was nearly taken in, so far, at least, as to wish him to go on with us, till my companion, like Faithful, contrived in a whisper to put me upon my guard. How we shook him off I forget, but we did accomplish it, and with a very discontented and almost ferocious look he returned, like a baffled demon, up the valley. I often regret that I forgot to make farther inquiries about him, or even to register his name. He is probably long since dead, by a leap from a linn, or a drunken fall from a crag, or by immersion in a wreath of snow. It is melancholy to think that hundreds, we believe, of the romantic districts in Britain are infested by similar specimens of broken down victims, and that poor Hartley Coleridge was little better than one of them.

Loch Donachar delighted us, as it does all the world, not so much for grandeur as for beauty, and seemed worthy of all the glory poured around it by the power of poetry. The heat, however, had given me a severe head ache, and I did not enjoy it so much as I had done a year before, when I visited it early in spring, and ere yet the tide of summer visitors had begun to flow. Next morning, after breakfast at the Inn, we walked down the river side, bathed in it, to

our great refreshment, returned to the farm-house at the side of Loch Tarat, and the following day reached home. I never saw poor Fergusson again, I think, till two years afterwards, when I found him stretched on his death-bed, dying of a slow consumption, and submitting with most Christian resignation to the fate which was hurrying him away, ere fully of age, from life, fortune, and prospects of unusual happiness. Shortly afterwards he died in peace.

A different and worse destiny was that of Michael Green, a lad of much more talent than Fergusson. He had a keen sense of humour, no small power of intellect, and unwearied diligence of application. He became an admirable scholar, and was appointed tutor in an academy in Shropshire. But he had, unknown to his early companions, contracted other habits besides that of close study, and ultimately went mad, and committed suicide. He is said to have done so—he was a first-rate classical scholar—after the old Roman fashion, bleeding himself at the wrists to death, and to have died watching the slow dropping of the blood with the mad eye! Poor, unfortunate Michael Green!

Fergus Mac Alpin was one of his principal companions, and for some seasons, too, one of my intimate friends. The chief tie which brought and kept us together was an insatiable love of out-of-the-way books and speculations. At a certain hour each evening, when the Evening Star was in summer beginning to tremble over the mountains of Glenconochie, or when in winter the Constellation of the Plough was lying level over the vast Ben Coran to the North, we met at the river-side, and spent an hour or two in conversation. Sometimes on the books we had been reading, sometimes on public or village affairs, sometimes on the preachers we had heard the previous Sabbath, and sometimes on the awful topics of God, a Future Life, the truth of Christianity, the nature of man—subjects which even then engaged much of my thoughts, and shed shadows and lights upon my path. I remember little of the special speculations started—

they were probably sufficiently crude—but I never shall forget how our voices sunk into whispers, and our hearts beat thick, and our souls were at once excited and subdued while speaking of such themes, sitting amidst the willows, or pacing the sands, with the sky hanging her large, weighty, and gleaming constellations over head, and the river speaking to herself in her most solemn and spiritual tones at our feet. Sometimes, when my companion failed to keep his appointment, I spent my time deliciously by myself, gazing unweariedly at the mountains resting against the stars; at the woods crowning the steeps with their shadowy plumes; at the orbs of heaven as they came forth in their beauty; at the meteors, which are most frequently seen somehow by a solitary eye; and listening to the thousand interwoven harmonies of breezes, streams, night birds, and the distant cries of dogs from the farm-steading, foxes from the hill, and boys from the village. Yes,

> "In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,
> When the still nights were moonless, I have known
> Joys which no tongue can tell: my pale lip quivers
> When thoughts revisit them."

Of this my closest companion for some years, in my boyhood, I have long lost sight. I rather think, however, that he subsided into a professional man in a distant city.

In our village, as in every other, there were some remarkable characters, redeeming its society from common-place, and adding a queer *outré* charm to its many points of interest. One man, Angus MacLeod, visited the village only at certain, or rather uncertain, times, and mainly for the purpose of seeing my father. He was a harmless maniac. He had originally kept a turnpike in the centre of immense dark fir woods. One morning, a carter passing by, and wishing to pay his toll, got no response to his call. Opening the door he found Angus stretched on the ground, in a swoon. When raised up, and brought back in some measure to him-

self, he was found to have lost his reason. It was gathered, from his disconnected ravings, that at midnight he had heard a noise, looked out, and saw, or thought he saw, the Enemy conveying, in a chariot, a well-known gentleman of the neighbourhood, who died about that time, as he thundered out in Angus' ear, "To Hell." From this shock he recovered partially, but continued ever afterwards, he fancied, to receive visits from angels and other denizens of the spiritual world. These bore him messages, and referred him, for the elucidation of any obscure points in them, to my father. The poor being accordingly, twice or thrice, at least, every year, came to the manse; I remember him well, with his brown dirty great coat, his high sloping brow, his look of dreamy abstraction, and his vacant but gentle smile. My father always received him with kindness, heard his story with much attention, prayed with, patted him on the back, and sent him home for the time satisfied. We all looked at him with considerable terror. At last his periodical appearances ceased, and we found, on inquiry, that his body had been found, stiff and stark, in the wood near his own dwelling. He had wandered among the plantations, fallen asleep, and expired of pure cold and exhaustion.

Another strange being was a beggar, ycleped in nickname, Mac Pherson *Num*. He lived in a little hamlet two or three miles from the village. Every day, however, when the weather permitted, he might be seen with blue bonnet, blue kilt, sharp worldly eye, and a white bag slung over his shoulder, begging from door to door. At night he returned laden with meal, oat-cakes, lumps of cheese, and pence. He had this singularity: no one was ever permitted to enter the hovel where he dwelt, which, indeed, was well guarded by a *cheveaux-de-frise* of filth and stench. In that hut he lived, utterly alone; and at last, like one of the wild creatures of the wilderness, he died utterly alone. Missed upon his usual rounds, the neighbours forced their way into the house, and found, amidst a twenty years' accumulation of rubbish, more

than 200*l.* of money, in pounds, crowns, half-crowns, sixpences and pennies.

Not in the village, but some ten miles to the westward, and among the hills, lived another curious genius, named Hector Mac Callum. He was noted for his improvisatore powers, indeed considered himself one of the last specimens of the Highland Bard, or Sennachie; and was not without pretensions to the second sight. He attended markets, and after having been plied with plenty of whisky, would commence and spout, or sing Gaelic songs and rhapsodies, which were said, by those who understood the language, to possess considerable fire. Some waggish person persuaded him to write, in English, a picture of the splendid scenery around. As his knowledge of English was very imperfect, the result was an inconceivably ridiculous hubbub of misapplied words, superlatives soaring above superlatives; and to add the last element to the jumble, and make it "thick and slab," the wag, a man of some literature, prefixed a preface, full of really exquisite ironical praise, commending the author for his noble superiority to common rules, his lofty contempt for grammar, his manly and daring use of the privilege of genius, to talk nonsense, and so forth. Hector lived some years after this, and died by a fall from the precipices of the east side of Ben-Ample, where he had been pursuing a stray goat —a fate fit for the last of the Sennachies. It was said that he had predicted his own departure in a Gaelic ode, entitled "The Doom of the Poet." It was said, too, that meeting one day a celebrated statesman, who had an estate in the neighbourhood, hurrying in his carriage toward Edinburgh, he cried out, "That's a dying man," words which were fulfilled a few days afterwards. Men still, as they pace the base of Ben Ample, and point up to the rock down which Hector was dashed, sink their voice into whispers as they speak of his predictions.

The village and neighbourhood possessed a number of smaller originals—such as a mad woman, who, in her higher

fits, occasionally appeared in the streets, and was followed by a procession of boys. It was almost sublime to see her infuriated gestures, and to hear her torrent of Erse oaths as she turned upon her pursuers; you thought of Ulrica on the walls of Torquilstone, or of Meg Merrilees, when drummed out of Kippletringan. There was also a little hump-backed dominie, whom his scholars occasionally turned out of school, sending the "schoolmaster abroad" with a vengeance, and others of less mark and likelihood. I mention only one more, who had a very singular history. His name was James Henderson. He was the son of a watch-maker in Inverness, whose widow, on his death, removed to our village, and took up a small shop. James was sent to school and became a clever scholar, particularly in mathematics. From school he went to Marischal College, Aberdeen, and ultimately took license as a preacher in some one of the dissenting bodies. He seems, however, to have imbibed infidel sentiments from Voltaire, Volney, and other writers of that stamp. He failed in preaching, from a coldness of manner partly, and partly because he was lame in one of his limbs. He went abroad, to Nova Scotia, for two or three years, but even there his ill-success pursued him, and he returned to his native country. I used to see him loitering about the village with a settled look of disappointment lowering on his brows. At last he heard of a vacancy in the neighbourhood of Dumfries, and by a timely application succeeded in obtaining the call to a good congregation. He went away in great spirits, but returned in a few months to invite a young lady, daughter of a respectable exciseman, to accompany him southward, as his wife. She declined: he left in deep dudgeon; and in half-a-year afterwards became insane. The first terrible fit was cured, but his mind was effectually shattered, and he came back the wreck of what he had been. For many years he continued to haunt the village, sometimes keeping a school, sometimes working as a day-labourer, sometimes all but begging his bread. A strange being he was! The disease had stung his

mind into tenfold activity, and revealed in him a vein of genius which no one had before suspected. It disclosed, too, his infidel opinions, and he sometimes disgorged the vilest things. It became quite a treat for the thoughtless lads to gather round "Lucifer," as he was called, especially under the evening shadows, and to hear his outpourings, which consisted of the cleverest and strangest thoughts, diversified by oaths and blasphemies—now making his auditors shudder, and anon stirring them to inextinguishable laughter. I often, while pacing at night the river side, heard the roars of laughter from the bridge, or the old tree in the centre of the village, which announced that "Lucifer" was there in all his glory. He sometimes said striking, as well as strange things. Looking up to the Comet of 1835, he cried, "I have long been speculating about the nature of comets: I have found it out at last,—they're the steamboats of the universe." His criticisms on books, men, and preachers were singularly clever, and often just. To church he never went, however, latterly; but as the hearers were crowding in on Sabbath morning to hear the sermon on one side of the river, "Lucifer" was seen on the other, wending his solitary way up the bank toward some secluded spot, where he spent the day, either in reading, or in the company of his own wild thoughts. It was almost terrific to me to watch the lonely wanderer striking on toward the woods, and I sometimes asked, "Has he an appointment there, and with *whom*?" Apart from his mental aberration, which varied at different times, Henderson was an amiable, moral, and harmless creature, much liked by all; and his tone, latterly, in reference to Christ, which had been horribly abusive, underwent a change, and he spoke of him with a curious mixture of affection, admiration, disbelief, and something approaching pity. I often sighed as I thought, had this poor unfortunate but lived in the days of the Redeemer's flesh, he would have soon sat down beside his brother, the demoniac, clothed, and in his right mind, at these blessed feet! He has long been

dead—he died of sheer weakness and old age, and is, I trust, sitting there now.

Not many distinguished strangers visited our village,—it was too far out of the way for this. One day, however, as Henry Thompson and I were standing on the bridge, a gay open carriage passed us, and I noticed a tall, broad-shouldered, distinguished looking man, dressed in a round straw hat, blue coat, buff waistcoat, and nankeen pantaloons, with two wild light blue eyes, which, shining from amidst long yellow hair, reminded me of two hawk's eyes gleaming through a bush of yellow fern. He was accompanied by some ladies, and seemed in raptures with the scenery, points in which he was showing them with extended arm. I noticed Thompson blush, and look down, and so soon as the chariot was passed he said, *sotto voce*, "That's my professor, Christopher North." We ran after, in hopes of seeing him again, but he did not find metal attractive enough in our inn to induce him to tarry, and was borne away from our view in a whirlwind. He alluded to this rapid passage to me many years after, and regretted he had not taken more time to see our country. He was the first noted author I ever saw; but a year or two after, I, and two or three of my companions, having walked some forty miles across the hills, to attend the Braemar Highland games, were rewarded by a sight of Jeffrey, seated in a carriage, and with his black eyes, hair, and smart little head, reminding us of what Hogg called him, "the wee reekit deil o' criticism." It was, I think, the same year, that one day, standing at the old tree, I saw my father returning from the post-office with a newspaper in his hand. As he passed, he said, in almost a whisper, "Lord Byron's dead." I felt stunned, as if by a blow on the skull: I could not say a word, but ran up to Henry Thompson, whom I saw approaching, and stammered out, "Lord Byron's dead;" and he next was struck dumb with wonder and grief, and for three or four minutes we stood silent and awestruck, in thoughts too deep for tears. I had only by that time read extracts and

portions of Byron's poetry, but the impression made had been very profound.

A year or two after, a remarkable event occurred in our quiet little history. My father said to me one morning, as he dropped a letter from his hand on the breakfast-table, "Great news! Andrew Thomson, of St. George's, Edinburgh, is coming, after all, to address us on the Apocrypha controversy." At this I greatly rejoiced. I had read all that controversy, especially Thomson's Second Statement, and agreed thoroughly with the Edinburgh Society, which, my readers must remember, had objected to the London Bible Society circulating the Apocrypha along with the Bible, and had carried the mind of Scotland in general along with them. I had also a strong impression of the powers of Thomson, and an earnest desire to hear him. He was at the time going around various districts of the country, and delivering orations on the subject—had been invited to our village repeatedly, and at last had complied. My father and I were waiting for him when he arrived in a gig from the south. He was a strong-built, bluff-looking man, of the middle size, with a bull-dog physiognomy, and thick curling hair. His manner was frank, bold, open; his mirth sometimes immoderate; his conversation singularly rich, powerful, diversified with anecdote, and, when he was contradicted, full, like his speeches, of vigorous argumentation, and clear, rapid statement. He addressed a crowded audience in the evening in a speech of three hours' length, distinguished by his usual qualities of pithy statement, commanding logic, clear, strong diction, masculine eloquence, and vivid sarcasm and wit. The effect was overwhelming, and was considerably enhanced by an incident which occurred. An old Baptist minister named Johnstone, with more zeal than discretion, got up at the close, and put in a very feeble reclamation in behalf of the London Society. Thomson rose next like a lion, lifted up the speech of the old man as he might a puppy-dog, and with majestic and scornful ease disposed of it and him

in a few minutes, amidst shouts of laughter. The poor old creature actually wept, and said aloud, "If I had time and *tawlents*, I think I could answer him yet." This, of course, gave the climax to the merriment, which became altogether ungovernable. At the end, Thomson went up good-naturedly to the old man, entered into conversation, apologized for his vehemence, soothed him, and sent him home quite pacified. Next morning, he demanded a fishing-rod and a guide. My father being occupied with some pastoral duty, I was but too happy to offer my services to carry his basket and show him the way up the valley to Loch Rennie. It is a romantic road. Striking west from the village, it crosses first a flat, fertile plain, surmounted by the black, bold Grampians; it then defiles into a narrower valley, filled with woods, overhung by the mountains, and with the river Rennie stealing through the groves, and in the shadow of the perpendicular crags. Farther on, the valley again widens, the woods disappear, the river is seen running through a wide, open moorland, with a few patches of corn diversifying the heath and rocks; and on both sides stand up excessively rugged hills—one mountain, Ben-Darg, lifting up on the south razor-like ridges, and a keen, sharp summit, to the height of 2,500 feet above the level of the sea. Here we crossed the Rennie at a small bridge, and then Thomson adjusted his fishing apparatus, and began his sport. All the way up, he was in a glad, genial, condescending, and communicative mood, treating me, although only a lad of thirteen, like a companion and friend, and speaking often in broad Scotch. I plied him with questions about the men of my dreams; and his answers were sometimes racy. He described Wilson as an "intellectual Cateran, a poetical drover, who, had he lived forty years before, would assuredly have been hanged for cattle-lifting;" but owned, at the same time, that he was one of the most gifted men alive. "Coleridge," he said, "had never yet been wakened; could he possibly be so, none of the Seven Sleepers could tell the world so much." Wordsworth, too, was "a

drowsy but deep-running river—a kind of Dutch demi-god." Chalmers was "the most ordinary man in the world, a homely Fife farmer, till some idea or other made him stark mad, and then he became absolutely inspired." Scott, too, was "just a Border horse-dealer, till you either put punch in his head, or a pen in his hand, or an old ballad into his mouth." Dr. Gordon was "one of the lower Alps—no fiery hues of fancy about him, and a great deal of frost, but clear and strong." His descriptions of the conceited Evangelicals of the South, who went about "always in fancy, leaning on the arm of Lord Bexley, and had turned the Bible Society rooms into a big toy-shop for loitering ladies and dandies;" and of the Moderates in the North, "living on the reputation of having got a bow in youth from Principal Robertson, and waddling in his old boots," were exceedingly sarcastic. Brougham, he said, was a wild, rough bear, with a terrible power of passion and sarcasm in him, but as evasive in argument as an eel. He often had argued with him on Christianity, but never could get him to confront him fairly; he was always running away at a tangent. As to study, he seemed to have done so ere he was born; but a good deal of his knowledge, like the wrong cloak picked up in a lobby, hung "very loose about him." Byron was a kind of Centaur, half man, half beast; or like Milton's lion, with his head in the sunshine and his lower parts in the centre of the earth. Burns was the brightest man he ever met. When a young man, he said to me, he had come from Sanquhar, where he was born, to Ellisland, to have a night with the poet. He found him, in a fine autumn afternoon, sitting over his black bowl, before the door of his house, surrounded by some farmers and gaugers, who seemed nearly dead, partly with drink, and partly with laughter at Burns' jests. He himself, however, was quite sober; and, after dismissing his guests and having tea, took Thomson out to the red scaur above the Nith, where was his solitary and favourite walk. The corn was ripe; the river was full; the dying sun was glinting his

last and best through the trees; it was "a golden moment for a poetic heart," and Burns got into his glory. He spoke of nature, and of his country, of love, of politics, and of poetry, till the large tears dropped from his eyes, and were "mixed," said Dr. T., "on the ground with my own." As the shades lengthened, and the sun went down, and the evening-star appeared above Criffel, his tone became more deep and solemn. He talked of himself; deplored his errors; and hinted that pride and disappointment had had a large share in producing them, and that he regretted that after his first success he had not gone abroad. As he spoke of the aristocracy, their usage of him and of his country, he stamped fiercely on the ground, and the expression of his "ardent eyes" became almost terrific and unearthly, as they shone amid the tender gloom of the autumnal twilight. He cried, "There will be a day of reckoning yet, as sure as yon star is shining over Criffel. Ten Glencairns would save this Sodom; and there has only been one, and he's dead." He alluded to his own life as hanging by a thread. He said he was tormented by headaches and palpitations of the heart, which his occasional use of spirits only increased. But, he added, "I have had my day, and Scotland will remember me as long as she is Scotland still." He then repeated, in deep, monotonous, and mournful accents, the lines "To Mary in Heaven," which he had composed not long before. On returning to the house, there was a new set of hero-and-toddy-worshippers arrived; the black bowl was again produced, and Burns' mood was changed accordingly. He sang; he extemporized verses; he cracked jests thick as minute-guns; he insisted on replenishing the bowl again and again; he threw out daring political and religious remarks; and altogether, like Cleopatra and her pearl, wasted intellect, wit, and genius, which might have served for years, in one night of lurid brilliance. Thomson left the next morning, and, except for a few minutes in the street of Dumfries, a year or two afterwards, saw the unhappy bard no more.

I asked him if he had met Hall or Foster, and what he thought of them. He said, "Hall would have made an admirable Antediluvian, sitting on a sea-shore, and spending a few hundred years out of his nine in polishing pebbles and selecting round and sparkling shells; but he had no notion of wasting precious time in our short-lived day in such work as polishing sentences. But his conversation was very different; it was one spur and sparkle—no repose and no tedium—good things perpetually bickering out of his mouth, till the very smoke of his eternal pipe seemed to coruscate." "Foster was a profounder man, but shut up like a giant under Etna. His usual conversation was careless, but he sometimes grunted out great things." Of Macrie, too, he spoke highly as a first-rate judge in historical matters, and a capital *advocate* of a cause too, but somewhat heavy, and spoiled by being the *facile princeps* of a petty party. "He's the head o' the Auldlicht,* indeed," he roared out in laughter; "but where, pray, is the middle or the foot?" From such talk he turned with vast gusto to the sport of angling. I thought I noticed many of his peculiarities in his mode of fishing—his eagerness sparkling in his eye, when fixed upon the waters, his manly sternness in the firm grasp he took of the fishing-rod, and his impatience in hastily shifting his ground when the fish would not take. He caught a few. I amused him by crying out (alluding to noted Apocryphists) as one came forth, "There goes Brandram;" as another appeared, "Poor Hughes!" and to a third, "Woe's me for the noble blood of Bexley!" He angled on till he reached Loch Rennie, when he sat down, and we lunched by the side of the placid lake, surrounded by its ring of heathy mountains, on which the heather was just beginning to blush, and by its stripe of green copse-woods, spotted with one lonely island, and overtopped by the gigantic Ben-Ample, the summit of which barely loomed into view. I asked him what he thought of our lake as compared to Loch Ketturin. He said, "Loch Rennie has more peace in its aspect; it is

* "Auldlicht," a small religious party in Scotland.

humble in its beauty; it is not yet spoiled, like Loch Ketturin or Loch Donachar, by the praises of visitors and poets. I sometimes think it's a good thing that each of these lakes is not nearer Edinburgh, else it would become altogether intolerable in its self-consequence. Even as it is, the mountains in the gorge of the Trosachs hold their heads higher than other hills, and look positively *prim.*"

In the cool of the evening we returned home. I forget all his conversation on the way except some things he said on Edward Irving. I asked his opinion of him. He pointed to the lofty Ben-Darg, round whose summit the mist was beginning to gather. "Look there," he said, "there he is! What a tall, striking, bold, and towering fellow! how proudly he bears him to the vale and to the hills around! but look, too, what dark precipices there are on his sides; aye, and see the mist of night has come down *first* on his brow. Nay, as the day has been hot, and as the mist has a somewhat suspicious and sulphurous look, I should not wonder though he should be caught in a thunderstorm ere morning—that's just Edward Irving. I yield to no man in admiration of his genius and good-heartedness; but he is proud, rash—precipitous, shall I call it?—and in danger of gathering mist, which may one day darken into a tempest. But he'll be a noble mountain to the end." "He bears," I ventured to say, "just the penalties of being nearer than other men to heaven, attracting mist and sunshine, light and lightning, first." "True," he replied; "but I must say that I prefer, and would wish to be one of, such men as Luther, who are always clear amid their altitudes, humble, too, in their greatness, or as my friend Chalmers, who sometimes gets into a fog, but who flutters and flutters and works away with yon two tremendous arms of his till he dispels it, and comes out uninjured. Irving will get deeper and deeper from the sheer want of common sense, and will, perhaps, die ere he has found his work, or properly begun to live. Yet I love him as a brother."

Arrived at my father's house, he continued the same easy

yet interesting talk at the supper-table. The next day after breakfast he took his departure; I saw him only once afterwards, or rather heard him, in St. Enoch's Church, Glasgow, in the dim twilight of an April Sabbath evening. It was the evening of the Sacrament. I do not remember the subject of the discourse, but shall never forget my impression of the grand voice pealing through the crowded chapel, the practical tendency of the matter, and the solemn urgency of the close. It was, I think, about a twelvemonth after, that at the door of his own house, this strong man "bowed down; he bowed down, he fell," and in a moment expired, like an oak which, although it has resisted a thousand storms, has had the ground secretly undermined below it, and sinks helplessly into the gulf, or like a ship which has weathered many a blast, but which goes down when shorn by the sharp edge of the assassin-rock below, so, his constitution sapped, and perhaps his heart broken, the Luther of Scotland went down. His wish had been fulfilled. No mist had ever gathered on his clear and manly brow, no decay or decrepitude had visited his mind; his eye was not waxed dim, nor was his natural force abated: in the full pride of his powers, and in the zenith of his fame, he was gathered to his fathers.

I am naturally superstitious; and my tendencies in that direction have been fostered by early readings, by the proximity of the Highlands, and by the scenery of my birthplace. Mountains I have always thought, apart from the traditions which have gathered around them, tend to cast a gloom upon the spirit. They seem not of the earth, earthy; their changes of aspect are so numerous and so sudden, and their inhabitants so few and so *grave!* Solemn, if also silly sheep, sepulchral-looking ravens, Alpine hares, with their unnatural whiteness, shy ptarmigans, shyer blackcocks, and shepherds stiff and silent often as the rocks around them—these are the principal inhabitants of our Scottish mountains; for smugglers, and the cheerful contraband smoke of their stills, no longer diversify the life of the solitary landscape.

All this, coupled with the sterner features of the scenery, the lonely cairn on the summit, the herbless granite around, the few cranberry-bushes struggling with the wintry air a little below, the small inky pools farther down, the homeless streams, moaning amid their alders and birches at the foot, tend to produce emotions compounded in equal parts of sadness and of sublimity, of a feeling of the lonely and a feeling of the lofty. Hence the peculiarly gloomy character of the Highland temperament, the Highland music, and the Highland poetry. Hence ghosts glide in naturally, as it were, both into their landscapes, their songs, and their stories. Even as they seem to exhale out of the spray of the waterfall, or to be let down gently from the rainbow when it drops on the hill, or to rise irresistibly upon the vacant mountain-side, or under the thick shadows of the forest-trees, so they swarm naturally and in vast numbers upon the eye and imagination of the Highland seer or bard. I cannot say that I ever saw one, but I often trembled at the possibility, and often inclined my ear most diligently to the tales told of them by the gossips of the country-side. Many of these were duplicates of what I have since found common in all country districts.

There was a man in Glen Coran, who had been poor but wicked, till one day, coming home from the peat-moss, he encountered an aged carle, who entered into conversation with him, and the rest followed—he was, on the usual terms, shown a gold heap in a black bog in the moss; he became suddenly rich, bought lands and houses, reared sons and daughters, became apparently pious even, and gave large sums to some of the Church schemes of the day; but at last, while sitting one night before his fire, heard a knock at the door, and going out, found the aged carle grinning and growling as he cried, "Ye have had the peats; come away to the fire." Of course, too, after his disappearance, his coffers were found full of peat-moss. Then there was a story of a wild laird, who had been absent, it was supposed, on purposes of seduction, among the glens of another strath. He met a stranger

while crossing a high moorland, went into an alehouse with him to drink, came home next day without his shadow, found out the monstrous fact, and died of a brain-fever in a few days, raving, "I have lost my shadow and my soul." His very coffin, they said, cast no shadow as it was carried to the grave. There was a story, too, of the disappearance of a little lovely girl, who lived near the foot of Ben-Ample. She had gone out to gather wild flowers, nuts, and berries in the woods near its base. She had been last seen lying down to rest in a deep hollow, where a beautiful well was sparkling like an eye in the solitude. She was heard of no more for a year or two, when she came in one fine spring morning, carrying what seemed a bunch of the earliest flowers of the season in her hands. She was questioned as to where she had been, but returned no answer, save by a smile of ineffable gentleness, and by pointing to her bunch of flowers; on looking more narrowly at which, they found that they were not of earth! There were roses without thorns, violets bluer than the very heavens, lilies large and whiter than sunny clouds, and many flowers the very names and the very colours of which were unknown. They found her speech gone, but her gestures and looks were more beautiful than words, and during her sleep she muttered to herself sweet liquid sounds, quite strange, which seemed compounded of the voice of silver streams and the softest notes of the thrush. She in the course of years recovered her speech, but could then only give a confused, dreamy account of a beautiful lady, a rapid ascent, a white gate, golden fountains, and a great multitude of men and women, who had all, she said, become birds, and were singing in a mighty tree, high as heaven. She lived for a good many years after, and was called "Heaven's Flower-girl;" was repeatedly asked in marriage, for she was very good and beautiful, but steadfastly refused; and as she died was heard, in the brief delirium before death, murmuring the old musical words of the strange language which she had long disused, even in her dreams. I

afterwards recognised portions of this wild traditionary tale in "Kilmany," that exquisite poem of Hogg's.

Every Scottish neighbourhood had then its haunted house; and ours with the rest. This was the house of a proprietor who left the neighbourhood always in winter to reside in Edinburgh, and returned to it in summer. It was left in the care of servants, who ultimately, however, were compelled by terror to leave it. It was situated half-way up a little hill, so steep that it seemed rather to hang than to stand. An enormous craggy mountain, embosoming a dark lonely lake, shot up behind. Woods clustered thick around; and a stream tumbled its waters past it through a black gully down upon the plain. It was altogether a fit place for *diablerie;* and there accordingly, if the most of the neighbourhood could be believed, infernal work one winter was going forward. Voices were heard at midnight conveying terrific tidings to the inmates. Doors were slapped violently, sudden knocks were heard at the windows and on the tables; the candles were extinguished in an instant; stools at the fireside were sent spinning and dancing through the room; and heavy weights were heard as if dragged along the floors of uninhabited rooms. One night, a voice came to a shepherd, charging him to go up to the little loch at a certain hour in the day, to hold a conference with the Being who spoke. In spite of remonstrance, he went, and never returned—at least to that house—although some said that the story of the voice was all a feint, to account for his departure; that he had robbed the house, and had been seen days after in a distant county. The alarm at his disappearance, however, led to the departure of all the servants. And yet still the house continued haunted. Men passing by, heard noises and saw lights; and one bolder than others, attracted by a light in the front window, crept up the bank, and venturing to look, beheld, he said, a party playing cards. A great "greeshy," *i. e.* lamp of oil, stood in the midst, and gave a light as faded and forlorn as if it had been fed by an old

corpse. The party had all Highland dresses—had whisky before them—and their language and oaths, which were thick, fast, and loud, were in Gaelic. Their faces were pale; and their gestures, even while they held the cards or drank, were as those of beings in anxiety and fear. As the spectator gazed, a loud whistle, which seemed to come down the chimney, was heard, and along with it a hoarse voice: "Close the play, and let's to work, my lads;" at which they all laid aside their cards, groaned fearfully, and the "greeshy" went out in the light of morning, which was now shooting in through the other window. The spectator felt so horrified at the look the card-players gave when the whistle sounded, that he reeled back and fell into a swoon; and when he awoke, found broad noon resting on the valley. He always maintained that he had seen a company of old Highland smugglers damned; but the sceptics of the neighbourhood said that he had been tipsy, as was not unusual with him, and had dreamed the whole. They also insisted that the voices, knocks, &c., were a contrivance of the shepherd and of a maid with whom he had an intrigue, and who was his accomplice in robbing the house.

The family on their return, after making some perfunctory inquiry into the strange circumstances, shut up the house, and removed to another quarter of Scotland. It was ultimately allowed to fall into decay, and still hangs, like an old nest, among its woods; shunned even yet, at even-tide, by all women, boys, and many men.

I remember being under a kind of nympholepsy for a few months, after reading a story in a newspaper entitled "A Vision of Death." This was a strange wild tale, describing Death as an actual being, a man unutterably old, with the grin of centuries of triumph carved on his lips, who appears to his victims before he destroys them. The father of a Highland family is haunted by him. He sees him before the death of each of his children,—at one time looking at him over a churchyard evening wall—at another sitting on the moonlit

grave of one of his deceased children—at a third, plucking his blankets, and showing himself beside his bed, till at last he himself dies, raving out, "I have seen Death." Words are wanting to describe the effect of this story on my imagination. For many months it literally possessed me. I could scarcely be alone at night-time; I lay with the bed-clothes piled over my face, lest, looking out, I should see the fearful stranger. When I had occasion to pass our churchyard, I did so with averted face and hasty steps, lest the sneering face of the old demon should appear above it. And more than once, I rushed down in broad day from my father's study, where I was sitting alone, to the parlour where the family were, in sheer terror at the chance of seeing Death. I never durst reveal my fear, which of course drove it inwards, and made it worse. A fine summer, however, succeeded, and swept this visionary terror away. Yet I would still shrink from re-reading the story—a story written by whom I never knew—but apparently suggested by Chaucer's well-known tale of the three men who "went out in search of Death to kill him." They meet an old man with wrinkled face, who sends them on errands which end in the death of all three. They hear no more of him, but it is Death whom they have encountered.

A year or two after this, I was sitting one day alone in the same study, in the library. At the opposite end of the room there was a bed, in which—it being about noonday, and my father and mother, who usually slept there, being both out—I knew there was no one lying. Suddenly *I heard from that bed a deep sigh*, the sigh of a human being in great sorrow or anguish. I was startled, looked at and below the bed—there was nobody there, and I instantly felt the shiver of supernatural fear. In a month or so after, the omen seemed explained, when my venerable father on that very bed groaned his last. It was two years subsequently, but may be introduced here, as I am on the subject of superstitions, that I awoke in my own little bed, in a small chamber, the only light of which came from a skylight, about five in a

bright June morning. I had been dreaming about seeing a little fair-haired girl, name unknown, who appeared to me kneeling in the street of the village. When I awoke, there she was still, as palpable as the chair beside her. I felt astonished, but not alarmed. I rubbed my eyes,—the vision disappeared; I restored them, by again rubbing, to their former position, and there she was again, but now a little more vague and shadowy. I rubbed them again, and it entirely vanished. I never saw anything more distinct and vivid. I should now, after the lapse of twenty-seven years, know the features again. I told the story shortly afterwards to a clever preacher who was living with us; he could give no explanation. I have since, in such books as Scott's Demonology and Mrs. Crowe's Nightside of Nature, met with stories of a similar kind.

My father died suddenly the next autumn. It had been a splendid season; and although not very robust, he had enjoyed himself exceedingly, and seemed sometimes to bask in the sunny light, as if he were tempering himself for a brighter atmosphere than earth's. I see him yet, sitting under a tree, when the sun was westering in the afternoon, or when a dim haze was covering the sky, telling me that this was the kind of weather common in Peru. He was preaching with even more than his usual power and vivacity, and complaining of little except an excess of bile, which was attributed to the hot season. When autumn arrived, he seemed to enter on an Indian summer, and his conversation mellowed with the season. I shall never forget seeing him, along with my mother, setting out on his last excursion. I had gone over to call on an acquaintance, who had lent me a favourite volume—it was, I think, a volume of Langhorne's Plutarch—which I was holding as a prize, and occasionally stopping to read. Returning, I met my parents, setting out on the last walk they were ever to have together in this world. My father asked me, "What book is that?" I told him; and he darted at me a look of

eager complacency, which has since often been a key to unlock the fountain of my tearful memories, and sometimes a "Perge" to animate and cheer me on my way. It seemed to say, "Be, if you can, a hero, like those whose lives you are about to read." He and my mother were going on a visit, some miles off in the country. They returned at night, and were scarcely home, till my kind, good father was seized with his last illness. It was of an inflammatory nature. He had been engaged to preach in the village of ——, but had other business fixed, ere earth was, for that Sabbath-day, and kept the eternal engagement. Amidst a weeping family, an anxious, inquiring flock, and the still sunshine of an autumnal Sabbath-day, he drew his last breath. My very heart bleeds, at the date of twenty-nine years, when I see again that chamber as it was then: the spirit of life fading on that open, manly countenance and earnest eye (fixed to the last on her he loved so tenderly); the spirit of death creeping up his strong frame, and breathing before it a ghastlier yellow than that of the leaves withering without, upon his cheek and brow; my mother fixed in speechless, tearless, astonished sorrow beside the bed; the rest of us dissolved in grief; the desk on which he had so often inscribed his ardent simplicities, standing near; the library, where he had melted down hours to moments in study and research, behind in the shadow; and the grey sunlight, trembling like a finger as it touched every object in the chamber of death. I recal what must have been then seen; but for the time, I was conscious of nothing but the centre of the room,—the mortified body and the departing spirit of a father.

Three days after, he was carried to his last resting-place. The day was clear, quiet, and somewhat cold. There was a certain sternness in the air, as if it refused to sympathise with the sorrows of frail mortality. Never had I seen the mountains looking more proud and defiant, and never did the Rennie seem to run with a calmer and more unmoved current. One whose own heart was sad, felt almost angry at Nature for

not being more in harmony with his feelings, and wished for a lowering sky, a wailing wind, or even a savage storm. It was a large funeral. Some of the gentry in the neighbourhood were there to testify respect to one whom the whole country-side esteemed. The elders of the church were of course there, and some of the neighbouring ministers, and the village *en masse*. Many a grey-plaided shepherd had come down from his hills to follow to the tomb one who had taught his family and counselled himself. But perhaps the most affecting figure was that of an aged man, who had been once a friend of his minister, but had, through some untoward circumstances, become estranged, nay, a keen opponent. He, too, had joined the crowd of mourners, and there were tears in his eyes as he saw the dust lowered into the grave. When the funeral was over, he came up to the chief mourner, one of my elder brothers, wrung his hand warmly, uttered a word or two in a choking voice, and hurried away. He had buried that day the enmity of many years. His own winding-sheet was then high up on his breast, and not long after he was laid near his ancient minister.

My own feelings I can hardly venture to describe. At times the whole scene had a dream-like unreality, and again it burst on my consciousness like a storm of grief. And here, then, was my father, to whom I felt more as a companion and friend than in any cold, distant relationship of conventional respect or fear—my kind, playful, indulgent father—torn from my side for ever, and consigned to the companionship of the clods of the valley and of the nameless worms of the grave. I felt a sensation of unutterable dreariness and desolation. I felt, too, "I am a child no more; I have lost in one day my father and my childhood. I must now make ready to leave these pastoral glens, where I have sheltered long, and cowered in the shadow of obscurity, and prepare to front, battle with, and, if possible, gain a victory over, that strange, hollow thing, that big bugbear, the world."

Before repairing to College, where I had been destined to

go ere my father's death, I spent some pensive yet pleasing days in the country. I enjoyed a melancholy but profound pleasure in listening to some remarkable funeral discourses, preached on my father's memory, especially to those of a Mr. Elphinstone, a man of genius, whose name will be found in an after-part of these Memoirs. I looked at all my favourite scenes, under the light of the fading autumn, blended with that of the "joy of grief," and found them more beautiful than ever. Everything—the river, swollen, red, and with redder leaves swimming on its current—the woods, clad like "Joseph's coat in their many colours"—the leaves, rustling along the path, or falling to their own sad music—the stubble-fields, silently watching the silent weaving of the gossamer-webs above them—the mountains, stripped of the rich green of summer, and wearing thin, sere grass and russet fern upon their granite ribs—the sloe, bramble, and haw-thorn bushes bearing their belated fruit while all around was barren—and the weak but beautiful sun shivering on the verge of the southern sky, were all suffused with a tenderer sadness, a softer, dimmer, holier day, from my recent loss; and when night fell, I saw the great stars of the Plough trembling, like mighty tears, such "tears as angels weep," over the northern mountains. I bade adieu to my early friends; had one parting meeting with Fergus MacAlpin at the river-side; one strange talk with "Lucifer;" one subdued "Gaudeamus" even with Henry Thomson and Michael Green; and then, on a November morning, after kissing through tears my mother's lips, I crossed the wild moorlands to the south of Strath-Rennie, and proceeded on my way to Glasgow College. My father had been himself educated there, and preferred it to the nearer college of Aberdeen; and thither, therefore, partly too because I had a maternal uncle and some other friends in that city, I wended my solitary way.

CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION, AND GLASGOW.

THE day I left the village was one of those quiet, sober, but bright days, which seem, not to speak it profanely, shuffled out of October into the darker month. The scene of my walk was a wilderness of mosses and moors, through which a clear white road passed, like an innocent life through the confusions, sins, and miseries of a wicked world. But on this day the solitary place itself seemed quietly glad in the last smile of the season. The heather had lost its purple bloom, but the grass was green; the stones shone in the sunshine; the dun hill-sides were illuminated; and the streams bickered cheerfully by. I had only to turn my head, too, to see the giant peaks of the hill-country I had left behind, lifting themselves up through the clear sky, some of them already tinged with the slightest touch of the great snow-brush of winter. I had much in the past and in the future which might well have made me melancholy; but what can depress the bubbling blood of fourteen? I walked on accordingly with lively steps, occasionally glancing at a little copy of Horace I had with me, sometimes fixing my eyes on the landscape, so wildly beautiful as it perforce appeared in that serene and belated autumn light, and sometimes venting my feelings aloud, secure here of no audience except the sheep, which went *baa-ing* to and fro along the sides of the braes. At a particular point, where the road curves round a corner, and brings you to a little nook, a fine clear stream, after glimmering through a grassy margin, sinks below a small bridge, to find its way to a larger watercourse in the hollow of the glen; there I sat down and ate my mid-day meal,

which consisted of bread and cheese, and a draught of the cold water rushing by. This was a spot where I had often so rested when I passed through this desolate tract in summer days, when the water, not quite so cold, was far more grateful, as I dipped my bread in it; and when, as I sat luxuriously on the ledge of the little bridge, or on the greensward beside it, I had the summer bee humming around me, the summer wind swooning on my temples, and the butterfly skimming past through the air. Now all was silent save the trickling of the little stream, and the whole life of the wilderness seemed slumbering in a sleepy yet cold sun. Yet I spent there one happy hour; and although I slept not as I had done in the same place in the summer at other times, I did not omit to dream; and my dream, whatever it was, refreshed me for prosecuting my farther walk. I reached Dee-side that evening, after a walk of forty miles, and slept at Banchory.

The next day I pursued my way across the wilder, but far more interesting mountain tract stretching from the Dee to the Esk. It is a district to the last degree uneven, like the tossings of an ocean arrested and stiffened—steep hills hanging over narrow hollows, and rivers winding through difficult passes to gain the lower country, and often seeming to jar with the rocks and stern convolutions which oppose their progress to the eastern main. This day I lingered rather more than the last, and dined at a farm-house situated at the foot of the gigantic Cloch-na-ben—a hill noted for a vast stone which stands like a wart on its brow, and which sends down a stream into a wooded glen, dividing two very steep heights from each other. This glen, in summer, is a winding fringe of exquisite beauty, amidst the steep, frowning mountains. The stream passes by a shooting-lodge, and then runs under a solitary and picturesque farm-house, called Bridge of Dye, which crowns the northern of the two heights. The scene, even in winter, had a stern and sullen beauty, and was gilded by a bright day. About sunset, I found myself on the top of the Cairn-a-Mount—the summit of

a celebrated pass leading down from the Highlands to the Lowlands of Kincardineshire, or the Mearns. The road, after toiling up an excessively steep hill, appears to pause on the top; and the traveller, pausing with it, observes on his right hand a *cairn*, piled by the ten thousand hands of centuries. Arrived at this confluence of tributary stones, I found a most varied and superb prospect waiting for me. Dim in the shadows of the evening stretched away the Howe of the Mearns, from Stonehaven on the east to Forfar on the west, with the Garvock Hills bounding the plain southward, and the lights of Montrose shining on the verge of ocean, through the gathering gloom. Around and behind were moorlands, surmounted by Cloch-na-Ben, with the last kiss of the sun just melting away from his summit; and piled up in the remotest distance, against the glowing north-west, were the black masses of Loch-na-Gar, at the sight of which—it was the first sight—all the enthusiasm of my nature boiled up, and I could no longer be silent, but expressed my feelings in cries of rapture; nor could I tear myself from the spot till the last trace of day had died from the heavens. Then, with a sigh, like a poet coming down from some lofty ideal subject to every-day life, I plunged hastily down the steep and rugged hill, into the waste darkness of the night. Ere bed-time, after passing on the way much beautiful scenery, with which afterwards I became familiar—such as Fettercairn, the Burn, and the Gannachy-bridge—I reached the sweet little village of Edzell, lying near the river North Esk, and slept in the inn there.

Nothing else of any moment occurred till I entered Glasgow on the northern coach, and of all the nights of the year, on the 5th of November, while the bells were ringing a merry peal, and the boys on the street were uttering the old rhyme—

"The Gunpowder Plot shall never be forgot,
While Edinburgh or Glasgow
Can fire a single shot."

I found myself in a kind friend's house; the first one in which I had ever yet seen, incredible as it may seem now, a complete copy of Shakspere, in large octavo, Rowe's edition. This was quite a treasure to me. On Saturday mornings, the only mornings the students were not compelled to rise at seven and repair to their classes, I was wont, awakening at the usual hour, to dart out of a sofa-bed where I lay, and seizing on Shakspere, keep it pressed to my bosom till the first peep of day, while I lay in luxurious enjoyment, nestling among the warm blankets, and reading the immortal page.

And now began my College career in the famous University of Glasgow. As was the custom of students then generally, I took only two classes for the session,—the Latin and the Greek. The Professor of Latin was old Josiah Walker, the author of a poem entitled "The Defence of Order," which had been cut up by Lord Brougham in the *Edinburgh Review*. Walker was once a tutor in the Duke of Atholl's family, where he had met Burns. He had visited the poet at Dumfries, and subsequently had written his Life. He was a man rather of accomplishments than genius; full, however, of kind affections, and much beloved by many of his students. He had been, after leaving the Duke's family, a Custom-officer in Perth, and, it was said, owed his advancement to the Latin chair as much to political influence as to merit. He made, however, a very respectable teacher, and his occasional lectures on Roman Literature displayed very considerable acuteness and taste. He was a thin, tall man, with a large brow, but rather common-place countenance. The waggish and wicked among his class called him generally "the Gauger," and showed him little respect. Sometimes the "Defence of Order," and sometimes Brougham's review of it, was brought by a student to the class-room, and laid on the bench instead of the usual text-book; and when the Professor angrily inquired what book it was, the answer produced a general laugh. I, however, found Walker very kind, and ere the session closed loved him tenderly, although I was quite unable to read his poem

through. I had in this class a great disadvantage, from having been brought up at a country school, where no attention had been paid to prosody, or to the *minutiæ* of Grammar, and made, consequently, only a moderate figure, although I could read Latin easily, and had read much of it. In Greek I had all to learn, and derived a great deal of benefit from Sandford's instructions.

This brilliant man deserves a notice of some little length. Sir Daniel Keyte Sandford was the son of Bishop Sandford of Edinburgh. After studying at Oxford, where he was contemporary with the Earl of Derby, and occasionally carried away from him the palm of scholarship, he was appointed, at the age of twenty-one, Professor of Greek in Glasgow College, and threw himself into the duties of the chair with all the ardour of his ambitious and energetic nature. He had succeeded Professor Young,—a man distinguished, according to the testimony of his students, and some of them became more eminent than himself, for the energy of his enthusiasm, and the splendour of his eloquence. Lockhart, in his "Peter's Letters," describes him as in one moment discussing, with all the coolness of an acute and wary philologist, some point or particle of the Grecian tongue, such as ἆρα, and, in the next, hurried away by the recollection of a passage of poetry in which that particle occurred, into fine excursions of criticism, illustration, fancy, and eloquence. Young was a genuine enthusiast; he admired to passion all excellence, and used to weep like a child, now under Kean's acting, and now under Chalmers' oratory. As a teacher, however, he was partial; indeed, he was only professor to a small and superior section of his class, leaving the rest to gaze in blank astonishment, souring often into disgust with the entire study. He has left nothing behind him, except a criticism on Gray's "Elegy," in the manner of Johnson, which I never read.

Sandford, although young, brilliant, and flattered, possessed at first a considerable portion of common sense, and showed it by having the resolution to form, and the firmness to con-

tinue, an entirely different system from his predecessor. He set himself to teach all his students, and to drill some of them like a village schoolmaster. With the utmost patience and perseverance, he led them through the driest details of the Greek Grammar. He was rather strict in his discipline, and exactive in his requirements. I have seen him tower up into terrible passions, sometimes for no reason or a very slight one; and remember him once threatening to "cut the soul out of the body" of some student who had offended him. He had a pale face, not unlike Byron's, an eye rather heavy than bright; but, when angry, his countenance gleamed and glared like that of a Lucifer. Many called him a "sublime coxcomb;" and Jamy Miller, the Professor of Mathematics, used to say that Glasgow College had come to a sad pass, when it had got a gauger and a puppy for its professors of Latin and Greek. Sandford had, however, admirable points, and contrived, strict as he was, to awaken in his students that fine spring of generous emulation which, once stirred, slumbers no more. He showed, amidst all his coxcombry, a genuine love of learning. This affected us! Greek, we saw, was his universe; "and surely," said his detractors, "it must be a beautiful universe which can create such a tide of soul, even in a coxcomb;" while his admirers felt themselves sucked, by his "glittering eye," within the *mare magnum* of that noble language in which Homer rhapsodized, and Plato reasoned, and Demosthenes thundered, and Paul discoursed of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," till at one time a Felix, and at another an Athens, trembled.

Sandford made many of his students versifiers, although he could not make all of them poets. He insisted much upon their writing Greek verse, maintaining that this practice would secure, as no other method could, a knowledge of the minute delicacies, the tiny forces, and the refined shades of the language. His students, many of them, seconded their professor's intentions well and worthily; and I have heard

some of them exclaiming, "The Iambics for ever!" James Halley, whose name is familiar to many of my readers as a youth of immense scholarship and otherwise of great promise, who died prematurely, (I remember him well—a thin, blear-eyed, red-haired, frank, warm-hearted youth—what pleasant talks I had with him sometimes, and what a terrible fight with snowballs once in the College-green—hand to hand, and foot to foot, for two long hours!) astonished his fellow-students and his professor by handing in an entire Greek tragedy,—a feat which had rarely been equalled since the days of Buchanan, whose dramas, however, are only in Latin; and its language and versification had such merit, that, said Sandford, "it would have made the large grey eyes of Porson flash with rapture." To this species of literary divertisement I never took kindly; but while my fellow-students were making their Hexameters and Iambics, as they often did, extempore, in the class, I had a volume of "Old Mortality" or of "Tom Jones" with me, and forgot all the hubbub of what I deemed then the pedantic humbug around, while thrilling beside Burley in the cave, or accompanying Jones and Partridge in their memorable night-journey.

Sandford had fields in which he showed to greater advantage than among his juvenile students. These were his senior classes, particularly his private class; and his meetings from time to time with all the students in the Common Hall of the College. Entering such scenes, he seemed to cry,—"Off, off, ye lendings; come, unbutton here." He ceased on the instant to be a mere drill-sergeant to awkward boys, and finisher to the labours of bungling schoolmasters. He quitted the hedge-school for the Grove, and became no longer a teacher instructing boys, but a young rapt scholar, speaking to young, eager, and enthusiastic listeners. I remember, with especial interest, his readings of Homer and the plays of Sophocles. There was, unquestionably, a spice of affectation in his manner; but as he went on, his enthusiasm mastered and sublimated it into genuine animation. His voice qui-

vered with emotion; his arms, as they held the book, seemed to become winged with ardent excitement; and a kind of spiritual radiance—a cold glory, like the soul of snow—broke forth from his pale face, which remained pale still. The tones in which he pronounced certain Greek words, such as πολυφλόσβοιο θάλασσης, or αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν, are still in my ears; and so is his deep yearning utterance of some of the wails of Medea, Agamemnon, Antigone, and Prometheus. I did not belong to any of these elder classes, but I often stole in to enjoy an intellectual and imaginative treat.

The effect of his exertions and eloquence was a great revival of Greek literature in Glasgow, and throughout Scotland, for the impetus he gave was felt in other universities; nay, was reflected upon the schools and seminaries of the country. Even his most ordinary students carried home a certain taste for learning to which they had before been strangers; and some of his favourite pupils, repairing to the English universities, gained high prizes and scholarships for themselves, and a new crown for the university whence they had come.

I remember a little scene, (although dating considerably later than my first session of College,) at the distribution of the prizes in 182–, when Dr. Badham, (a Medical Professor, and author of a respectable and recondite translation of Juvenal,) in rising to speak, delivered a very eloquent oration, magnifying his own class—physicians, namely—above that of scholars in general, and describing with great power the adventurous enterprise of some medical students, who had gone away to Spain during the prevalence of pestilence, "crossing tracts over which the vultures were hovering, *to save the beauty of Barcelona and the valour of Gibraltar.*" There was something in the high-wrought rhetoric, and in the depreciation of classical studies expressed by the Medical Doctor, which roused both Sandford's emulation and his ire; and when his own turn to distribute the premiums of his class came, he prefaced it by a brilliant reply to Badham, praising classical studies, and declaring that the learned Doctor had first borrowed from the

Classics the "bright weapon" which he had afterwards plunged into their hearts. It was quite an academic tournament; and as such things were rarely witnessed by the students, it was watched with proportionable interest, and all agreed that in eloquence and keen retort it had seldom been surpassed.

Sandford's life in Glasgow was regular and laborious. He not only taught and lectured, but wrote various papers and books, including articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, in *Blackwood*, and the *Popular Encyclopædia*, and some elementary works, such as an Edition of Jiersch's Grammar. I liked and admired his style, without approving of it. It was lively, sparkling, rhetorical, often eloquent; but often flippant, sketchy, shallow; and it rarely, if ever, possessed that *concinnitas*—that chastened calm—which so thorough a Grecian might have derived from the study of the severe models of antiquity, where ragged edges and meretricious ornaments are alike avoided, and the thunderbolts of their Jove are as polished as the cestus of their Venus. As he said himself once of Sheil's speeches, "They were but froth, but they were excessively brilliant and fiery froth."

Sandford was kind enough to me, although I had very little intercourse with him, and never, I think, called on him except to get my ticket or certificate, when I found him standing at his desk, engaged in composition, which he quitted for a little, with a look and air of the blandest courtesy. He had a peculiarly graceful and springy walk, like that of a high-born belle when entering into a drawing-room.

In the year 1832, a new dream of ambition crossed his soul. The times had become troublous; the political atmosphere electric; great prizes were on the wheel. In Parliament, the name of his ancient rival, "Stanley, was the cry;" and towards this, as a new arena of display, the finger of his Evil Genius pointed our learned aspirant. He had occasionally, for some time before, been putting forth the feelers of future triumphant efforts, by speeches on political subjects in his own city. We remember one prodigious impression he

made by a speech on the Irish Education measure in 1832. The speech itself, when published, was eloquent, but did not account for the enthusiasm of its reception: that sprang from the liberality of its sentiments, and the splendid *éclât* of its delivery. I did not hear it, but met some people who had, and whose habitual density of prose-feelings and habitudes of thought it had disturbed into absolute enthusiasm. Many of his admirers, as well as himself, concluded from this and other exhibitions of a similar kind, that the orator had in him the elements of a great parliamentary leader, and that the chair of Greek might eventually be exchanged for the woolsack or the top of the Treasury-bench. He stood, accordingly, for Glasgow, in autumn 1832. I happened to be in town at the time, and was moved by curiosity to follow him once or twice to his canvassing meetings. I heard him address an audience in the open air after nightfall, and once again in a barn in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. I was not singular in suspecting both his motives and his capabilities. There were in his manner an elaborate condescension, an occasional testiness and pettishness of feeling, an ill-disguised contempt for his constituents, curiously contrasted with the soft flatteries which he supplied abundantly, which were but too prophetic of the fate which awaited him. He wanted not only the temper, but the readiness and resources, of a really popular and powerful speaker.

He failed in this first attempt, but came in for Paisley a year or two afterwards, having been meantime knighted by the King. His failure was instantaneous and irrecoverable. It had been predicted that the big Dan would swallow up the little at a gulp, and O'Connell accordingly had taken up his pencil to prepare to reply; but, after hearing a few sentences, threw it down with a contemptuous "Pshaw!" which rang the knell to Sandford's hopes. Lord Althorpe, too, it is said, while the speech was going on, sent a bit of paper round the Treasury-bench, with the words—"Sir D. S. is a ——puppy." The House, taking its cue from its leaders, laughed, talked,

coughed, did anything but listen, till the close of his speech, when, to crown the discomfiture, Stanley rose, and partly in compassion, partly in contempt, threw over the crestfallen knight the shield of his eulogium. The great mistake of Sandford—wonderful in a man who had mingled so much with the upper ranks and the world generally—was that of confounding a popular with a parliamentary audience. The scholastic and laboured air of his oratory, besides the determination to *shine*, manifest in his every word and gesture—the want of solid strength and manhood in his matter—the vanity and irritability of his temperament—his awkward position as half professor and half member—and his rapid transition from the Liberal to the Conservative party—all contributed to his failure.

He tried once or twice afterwards to rally against his ill-success, but with such manifest bitterness, and such a display of injured self-love, that he only succeeded in humbling himself further. His health, too, began to suffer; and the result was that, after a few months, he was compelled to resign his seat and return to the chair, which he had prudently contrived to keep open as a *dernier ressort*. Intensely chagrined, broken in constitution and in spirits, he came back to Glasgow, returning from public life as Lord Grenville—whose words I once heard Sandford quoting—said of himself,' "to Plato and the Iliad." He resumed with all his characteristic diligence the duties of the Greek chair; he resumed, too, his pen; and to his retreat from Parliament we owe some of his best droppings of criticism in *Blackwood* and the *Edinburgh Review*, inclusive of a striking picture of the ancient Admirable Crichton, the Brougham of Athens, the ubiquitous, ambidextrous, all-sided Alcibiades.

In 1838, his shattered system was seized with typhus fever, and he died, repeating, I believe, in his delirium the great hexameters of Homer. Thus strong and thus late was with him the ruling passion! I heard with the deeper interest of his death, as I was (in a distant part of the kingdom) recover-

ing from a severe attack of the same disease; so that both preceptor and pupil had been swimming for life at the same time and in the same fiery sea.

A great thinker or writer Sandford was not. I can hardly call him a man of genius, but a better teacher never sat in a professor's chair. A more ardent classical scholar has seldom breathed; more eloquent lips never sounded out the wondrous soliloquy which opens the "Agamemnon," or the melting and terrible wailings which shut the "Medea." He was no Bentley, or Porson, or Parr; but he gave an impulse to the diffusion of Grecian knowledge such as never came even from these redoubted scholars. During his whole career, too, and especially toward the close, he displayed a profound feeling of the claims of Christianity, and often vindicated the Greek, as well as the infinitely higher qualities, of the New Testament. He had his own failings, poor fellow! but there is reason to believe, that while Homer was the idol of his intellect, Jesus Christ became ultimately the God of his heart.

To return—I had scarcely entered College till the grand but short Saturnalia of the election of a Lord Rector took place. It was this year that Campbell the poet, after a keen contest with, I think, Sir Thomas Brisbane, was chosen. Cobbett, I remember too, was proposed, more in jest than in earnest. Campbell came down in March to be installed and deliver his inaugural address. It was a high day in the College. The grave professors themselves, although some of them were keenly opposed to Campbell, seemed excited, in a measure, by the scene; and the students, especially those of us who had voted for him, were in a state of uncontrollable enthusiasm. How I longed to see the poet, whose poems I had read amidst the wilds of my birth-place, and most of which, indeed, I had by heart! The Common Hall was crowded to suffocation. We students were fortunate in possessing, in our red gowns, a right of *entrée*. It was Campbell's native city, and he had never, we think, made a public appearance there before. He had left it a poor youth, and now

returned in the full blaze of fame, and to be received with rapture by the *élite* of its inhabitants. I was lucky enough to get into a position within a yard of the head of the seat which he occupied. I saw the pale, thin, sensitive-faced poet, with those black beaming eyes, rising up to bespeak the breathless assembly. I noticed that tremble in his voice and manner of which his biographer speaks in describing this scene, which left him, however, as he proceeded. I remember the effect produced by some of his better passages. When he said, for instance, that he was "far from wishing to damp the spirit of the *boy-poet*," a hundred young ingenuous faces instantaneously sparkled up as if in a gleam of sudden sunshine, and a hundred hearts beat out a whisper, "Perhaps *I* may be a Campbell and a Lord Rector yet." I noticed a certain dryness in the looks of the professors—the preliminary prayers of the Principal seemed coldly said; and I was told that at some of the more ambitious passages, such as that in which he describes the various accomplishments and attainments of the poetic mind, like the various colours "blending into the white light of inspiration," a sneering smile was seen to pass over Sandford's countenance. The speech was, on the whole, as a composition, slight and hurried, and was compared unfavourably with Lord Brougham's elaborate address, delivered two years before; although I heard poor Tom Atkinson, the bookseller and poet, truly saying, in his own shop an hour after, that there were some things in Campbell's speech that Brougham never could have said, at the same time mouthing out, in his usual theatrical style, the opening sentence of Jeffrey's rectorial oration, "On an occasion on which Burke is reported to have faltered, and Adam Smith to have remained silent, well might it have become me to have followed the example of the latter."

Campbell greatly confirmed and deepened the favourable impression made by his speech on the students, by his after conduct. He remained some months in Glasgow, and mingled much and familiarly with his constituents. Again and again,

as he was moving along arm in arm with those fine fellows, the sons of Stewart of Erskine, who knew him better, owing to their relationship to Lord Blantyre, I, in company with others, came along his path, and received a hearty "How d'ye do?" and shake of his warm hand, which was, of course, electrifying to young blood. He gave each of his students a copy of his speech; I preserve mine to this day, with the inscription, "To Mr. So-and-so, from Thomas Campbell." How precious this little present seemed then, and seems still, to each and all of us! He visited all the classes in their turn. Good old Walker, I remember, when the Rector entered the Latin class, commenced to read a prelection on poetry, to the amusement of his students, who thought he was showing off before the brilliant stranger, and to Campbell's apparent edification, who did not seem to be displeased at a clumsy compliment to himself, which the professor contrived to drag into the lecture. Campbell, besides, took incredible pains to make himself acquainted with the laws of the University, and to advocate the rights of his constituents. He mingled even in the convivialities of a certain set of the older students. A "Campbell Club," too, was formed, composed of his more ardent admirers, of which I was, I believe, elected a member, although I never attended its meetings. He commenced, also, a series of "Letters to the Students." Altogether, his rectorship was a brilliant epoch in the history of the University. When we saw the active little man, with his black wig, (there was "nothing false about him but his hair, which was a wig, and his whiskers, which were dyed,") beaming eye, frank, easy manner, and universal fame, walking daily in the midst of us, it was "as if the gods had come down to us in the likeness of men." At the close of the session he presided at the distribution of the prizes on the first of May; and although I had got no prize, and was a little gloomy thereanent, the speech of the Lord Rector, telling us, in glowing language, to "forget our toils or disappointments in visiting the romantic woods and glens and mountains of Caledonia,"

was exceedingly cheering and inspiring to my mind. I left the room, if not loaded with prizes, clad with wings—the wings of hope and high enthusiasm.

It may be as well here to complete what I have to tell of Campbell. The next session he did not, I think, come down from London at all. At the close, however, of the year 1828, he was—a most unusual proceeding—elected a *third* time Rector: this was partly owing to his personal popularity, and partly because he was understood to be pushing on measures connected with the rights of the students. He appeared, accordingly, to give a new inaugural speech; it was much better in composition, and delivered with far more ease and energy, than the former.

About a year afterwards, I was attending a meeting of a Debating Society, when a student, whom I knew well, bustled in with an air of vast importance, and requested leave of the chairman to communicate an important fact. This was, that Thomas Campbell had newly arrived from London, on a matter deeply affecting the interests of the University, and he proposed that we should rush out in a body, and pay him our respects. It was carried by acclamation, and forth we sallied—to the number of some forty or fifty—to his friend Mr. Gray's house, close by the Clyde. There we found, sipping his coffee, the warm-hearted poet. He rose; and in answer to a congratulatory address, delivered by an eloquent Irishman, said a few words, at once graceful and easy. I remember yet the contrast between the elegant drawing-room and the faded red gowns of many of the students, mine own included. It was, I think, the next day that he addressed a large assembly of students from a window of Mr. Gray's house—in which he introduced some allusions to the Clyde flowing past, and to the sun westering in his bower, full of eloquence and poetry.

I knew some of the studen who were intimate with Campbell; and I often expressed to them a strong desire to meet him in private. My wish was at last gratified. I was

asked to a small evening-party at the house of a relative, where the poet appeared. There were none present except a few of his favourite students, and the host, a noble, kind-hearted man, along with his graceful lady, and his amiable and beautiful young family. Campbell made himself at home in an instant; and I certainly have seldom met a man of more ingratiating manners, and more lively conversation: he did and said everything with such perfect ease. In the course of the evening, a celebrated talker of the town happened to drop in, and, presuming on his provincial fame, ventured to measure lances once or twice with the poet. But although sufficiently nimble and adroit in his way, he was no match for Campbell, who ran across his rapid and glittering fence, and transfixed him as with the light but deadly stroke of a rapier. Once he tried to overpower the poet with a thick succession of questions, but found he had met his match. Campbell answered his every query as a bee receives every rude grasp—with a sting,—with a keen although not caustic retort. "Is not Brougham a far greater man, far more Demosthenic in his thought and oratory, than Burke?" was one of the questions. "You might as well compare a Norland ox to a lion—a *rowte's* not a roar?" "Don't you think Byron as great a poet as Shakspere?" "No; this tumbler (of brandy-toddy) is not the Devil's Punch Bowl." "Is not Jeffrey the greatest critic Britain has ever produced?" "He would be, if Britain were Lilliput; smartness, strength; and a steel pen a claymore." "How do you employ such a flippant writer and bad man as Hazlitt to write for your magazine?" "Why, I grant that Hazlitt is a soured fellow, but he's a sublime *sourock*—he sheds a sort of oracular venom; and notwithstanding all the trash he often writes, he will say more in some of his single pages, than Jeffrey or Brougham in whole volumes. His blackguardism is his own affair; but it's more a misfortune than a crime—it's a kind of moral hump on his back, born with him. Besides, he's a poor unfortunate; and if we drove him desperate, I believe he would

literally commit murder, or burn the Tower!" The town-talker saw he had no chance with Campbell; and his rallies were far from successful—it was cleverness with a small dagger matched against genius with a sharp sword. He soon went away, and Campbell felt relieved. He said, "I hate these glib logical persons, who are eternally talking on literary subjects, and trying to entangle you in small dilemmas. I thought that race of prigs had been confined to London and the Modern Athens; I am grieved to see a specimen in this homely, manly town of Glasgow, where I remember the whole literature of the place confined to the walls of the College, or rather to Will Richardson and old Young." And then he handed a young lady to the piano, called on the landlord for a song (who gave us the "Bay of Biscay" in grand style, and sang afterwards "I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen" with the most exquisite feeling), kissed the children, and fairly danced a measure with the rest on the floor.

At and after supper there was a resumption of literary conversation. Of Byron he had a bitter opinion. He said he was the only poet of the age who went to the dunghill for inspiration, and thought that poetry should be a "mass of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores," a little sublimated. His strength was that of disease—he had less power than fury. He had passion, but wanted heart; and as to acquired knowledge, there was hardly a dunce in the Logic Class but knew more. He had once had a long talk with him about the Classics, and came back wondering at his ignorance, and calling him a "gifted booby." I ventured to say that Byron had described himself in describing Burns, as a compound of dirt and Deity. "Aye," rejoined Campbell; "but Burns' dirt was good, honest Scotch *yird*,* collected from the fresh new-ploughed land, although dashed with a little too much yeast from the ale-barrel. Byron's was vile foreign filth. As to Deity, there was little of it about either of them, in one sense of it; although both, of course, great geniuses, neither

* "Yird," earth.

was a worshipper, unless it were that Burns worshipped woman, and Byron worshipped himself." "And the Devil," some one rejoined. "No, he left that to Shelley, who was a much finer fellow, though, than his lordship. I met him once at the house of Horace Smith, and never saw a more singular and interesting creature. He reminded me of a cracked angel; Byron of a vulgar heathen god—a Vulcan crippled by a tumble out of heaven. Shelley had a beautiful face; with large, lamping, loving eyes; a small but well-rounded and arched brow; a tender, delicate hue on his cheek; a sweet smile, like a woman's, on his lips, and a form bending as if, in spite of himself, he were worshipping; his very walk seemed a perpetual prayer. You waited till he spoke, wondering what sound of melting music could come out of these fine lips, and, to your horror, there issued the very harshest and most peacock-like scream you ever heard. I absolutely started; I could hardly believe it to come from the man, but from some demon within him. The sound of his voice seemed to contradict all the rest of him—his look, smile, and the sentiments he uttered; only when, in the course of the evening, the name of Christ was introduced, and when the poor fellow got indignant, and began to blaspheme, then the voice and the sentiment seemed to attain a horrible concord, a ghastly unity. I was almost tempted to believe that Shelley was possessed by some extra-mundane power, against whom or which his better nature struggled in vain, which cracked his brain, voice, temper, and genius, and rendered him the beautiful wretch and glorious wreck he became. I never saw in a man so much of the Divine so fearfully counteracted and neutralized; and it was the same with his poetry. I remember, when the party broke up, he accompanied me nearly home, or rather I accompanied him, for he half ran the whole way, shrieking out all the time his preference of Plato to John and Paul." "Passages more beautiful and truly classical," he added, "more ethereal, more musical, more like the words and melodies of some loftier region, are not to be

found in poetry than in Shelley; but he often has made me furious at the execrable and abominable things, both in spirit and in taste, which the malignant genius within seems to compel him, next page, to vomit forth."

I asked him if he had seen Keats. He said only once, and he seemed to him a "feeble flower, on which the dews of Castalie were pressing with too crushing a power; a weak disciple at Pentecost, with too grand and terrible a tongue of fire seated on his head, and trembling below it. He was a genuine poet, but otherwise a capricious, conceited, spoiled, and self-pampered creature. When you thought of that strain of transcendent power, 'Hyperion,' and its author, you did not, indeed, feel inclined to say 'Hyperion to a Satyr,' but 'Hyperion to a silly child.'" He then dilated in terms I do not recollect on the difference between healthy and hydrocephalic power, taking Keats as a specimen of the latter, and Burns of the former. "Certainly," cried one, "Burns could never be charged with having lived with or died of *too much water in the head.*" This, poor as it was, produced a laugh, and terminated his discussion.

He diverged to the "Noctes," and to Wilson and Lockhart, both of whom he characterized by a few brief, decisive touches. He seemed to appreciate both, although he only loved one. Lockhart was the man of talent, Wilson of genius. Lockhart, he said, "seemed to think it a noble distinction to want a heart, and often did cruel things less from disposition than because doing them redeemed him from the charge of weakness. This was manhood overdone, and reminded him of Byron's making himself always a greater blackguard than he was. So Lockhart must be a savage, and paint his hair with red ochre, and wear a wolf's-skin, while, in reality, he enjoyed life far too much to be a very ill-natured man. Wilson had tons of acid in his constitution, but they were counteracted by a still larger amount of the milk of human kindness, as well as by a sense of the ridiculous, which made his very enemies less hateful to him from the ludicrous

aspects and light in which it showed them. But for this, he had been a terrible demon. Brandt, in my own 'Gertrude,' would have been nothing to him; the knout would have given place to the tomahawk." The "Noctes" he characterized as the recreations of a wild Titan—now bathing and flinging the waves about him—now running naked along the bank—now plunging into the dim forest—and now reappearing on a distant eminence, and shouting a sublime ode to the sun. Wilson had sometimes extemporized a whole "Noctes" to him; once in particular, when travelling in a postchaise to a large festive meeting, Wilson took up the programme, went over it all, and gave a speech for each speaker, perfectly in character and ludicrously like, besides interposing songs and bravuras of all sorts and sizes. He reminded him that night of the story about Goethe opening a German Annual and pretending to be reading, while, in reality, he was improvising a whole volume of poetry; a bystander exclaiming, "This man must be Goethe or the Devil!" and another replying, "He is both, for the Devil is in him to-night!" "Wilson is even a greater man by nature than Goethe, but he has lost himself by not knowing what is his own place: he is like a man so rich that he cannot tell for the life of him what to do with his wealth, and keeps squandering what has become worthless in his own eyes by its superabundance."

I remember no more of that night's conversation, but I met him twice or thrice afterwards, and shall cluster together the reminiscences of what he said during two or three *sederunts*, or walks about the College-green.

He did not like the Lakers. "They would, if they could, unclassicalize the world, and their arrogance and one-sidedness were intolerable. They seemed, sometimes, to be angry that any poets or men had existed before them; and he had serious doubts whether they believed in the Fall, so far as they were concerned. They reminded him of the Highland woman, who pretended that the MacDonalds at the Flood "had a wee little boat of their nain," instead of needing to be

saved in the common Ark. Wordsworth walked along the Strand, like Skiddaw come south, snuffing up his nose at all and sundry. Southey was a cross between Spinoza, Archbishop Laud, and Quaker Fox. Coleridge, had he not been crazy with laudanum, was the most tolerable of the set; often condescended to laugh; and when he did sometimes come down from the parachute of his metaphysical nonsense and clouds, he lighted on mountain-tops, not, like Wordsworth, upon gravestones or moleheaps. Wordsworth was, indeed, an intellectual mole, crawling over dust and dungheaps as if they were the milky way with its pavement of stars. He was often near quarrelling with Wilson about the Lakers. The idea was ludicrous of a man such as Christopher North, retiring from a *mêlée* where he might have been a perfect Cœur de Lion, to snivel, drink lake-water, and cant with those spiritual poachers, sanctified smugglers, and inspired pedlars.

He passed from thence to the subject of the older poets: "the soured seraph, Milton"—"Dryden, with his sharp strong scythe, mowing down all before him"—"Pope following after, with his elegant rake, and gathering in the remnants of the rich swathe"—Gray, "born a Greek and bred a Roman, thinking with Pindar and speaking with Virgil"—and dear Goldy, the "purest piece of instinct who ever lived—*a blind child led by God's own hand.*"

I asked him something about the orators of the day; but instead of touching on them, he commenced about those of the past. He had walked from Glasgow to Edinburgh to hear Gerald—"a great man, never fully developed, whom Parr had tried to make a pedant, and Godwin a philosopher, but who became in spite of them what was better—an orator and a genius. He looked, when speaking, Power and Passion personified—had something of the colour and all the elasticity of an African Roscius, added to a concentred strength of manner, at times, worthy of Fox or Kean—was one, you thought, that might have created a revolt in heaven. He

made others, for the time being, as great as himself. Common men—masons and shoemakers—seemed to rise with him foot for foot, as he rose in the might of his eloquence. But he got, like Burns, desperate and savage; and, like him, called in auxiliaries to his genius, which at last led that haughty power in chains. Fox he never heard in his glory; he saw only the trace of the dust which his whirlwind had raised; his oratory had been the agony and apotheosis of common sense. Sheridan was a drunk and glozing gladiator, with little heart, and with one of the clearest of heads partially muddled, but was capable of being roused and surprised into a man: his wit, however, reminded him of a Cæsarean operation. Canning *looked* the man—the gentleman—the statesman—the genius—everything—but was only a wax figure after all. Burke was too great, not for his own age only, but for any age; he not only adorned, but added to the substance and splendour of every subject he touched. On small themes his genius seemed sunlight shed on pebbles and straws, turning them into fire; on large, it seemed sunlight on gold, giving it a new and unearthly glory. There was absolutely no end to the rich originalities, felicities, and fertilities of his genius; and had he lived to this hour, he had been pouring out wisdom and fancy in equal proportions still. Bentham was a crotchetty old *chap*—full of sense, as dry as remainder biscuit—he was something higher than a lawyer, and something less than a legislator. Hazlitt says of him: 'His works have been translated into French; they should be translated into English.' Bentham would ask, like Newton, of Milton's Paradise Lost, 'What does it prove?' and, I believe, positively grudges the glory of a summer's day as a waste of light, and looks on a flower-garden as a useless excrescence in Nature. Bless me! if Jeremy had had the making of this universe, what a saving of stars there had been in the galaxy! There had been what Shakspere calls 'husbandry in heaven,' and earth would have wanted all its fine hills and splendid scenery—we would have had nothing but

corn-fields and candle-light! Brougham has a strange power of *simulating* the highest kind of moral indignation and scorn; he can transmute the fiercest passions into the appearance of celestial fire: 'tis the old tale of Pandemonium rising a palace of light out of the darkest entrails of hell; but the light and the materials are alike from the pit. Since Moloch, there had been no such philippics as those speeches against the Holy Alliance: it was 'black fire and horror.'"

He often recurred to the days of his own College career: to the scenes he had with Christopher North, and to his excursions to the West Highlands. He described, in wonderfully vivid language, to which I can do no justice, a thunderstorm by which he had been overtaken in Glencoe. "As I walked up the glen, I never saw such a heaviness in the air: the clouds had come down upon the two opposite ridges of the tremendous hills which begird the valley, and lay grimly glaring across the glen at each other, like deadly foes, eager, yet delaying, to come to close quarters. All at once a quick bright flash of lightning, followed by a roar as if the flash had lighted on and scathed a hundred bulls, seemed to sound the signal for the general engagement; and for two hours it was a succession of assaults of lurid fire between the opposite sides of the valley—gleams of ghastly light momentarily revealing the rocks and precipices, which were immediately after swallowed up in gloom—the thunders bellowing incessantly, and the cry of the Cona coming up from below like the wail of a child who had laid herself down to weep, while her father was engaged hand to hand with a foeman. From a cleft of a rock into which I had gone for shelter, I witnessed the scene with emotions compounded of sublime joy and quaking terror—for such a wild Waterloo of the elements I never witnessed before nor since. And it was almost as grand to see the clouds at the close, gathering up their sullen skirts and unused thunderbolts, and retiring from each other, unsatisfied and growling, while a rainbow fell from heaven, and bridged with beauty the awful pass

through which the Cona, now swollen with the rain, was sending up a melancholy thunder to the evening sky."

He spoke of Campsie Glen, too, with great delight; and said that when you were in it, it seemed as if a great round arm were surrounding and sheltering you from the turmoil of the city near it. He characterized the professors of his youth. "Richardson, the Professor of Humanity, was a fine although finical man; and his writings, without any genius, showed a glimmering perception of what genius was. He sincerely loved, although he could not poetically praise poetry. Yet his works seem already forgotten. Jardine was a fatherly old man—he was so sorry he was retired ere he had been elected Rector. Miller of the Laws of Nations was a dry but deeply-learned person. But old Young was the glory of the University in his day. A partial dog and a poor teacher doubtless; but in eloquence liker a Northern Scald than any one he ever heard speak. He needed only a line of Homer, aye, or a particle to mount on, and it became a Pegasus, and he carried you up to the third heavens. Such an *os rotundum!* such enthusiasm! such big and burning tears as he often shed! No acting could approach it, and it was all so natural! He had spoiled his style a little at first with imitating Johnson's *sesquipedalia verba*, but had nearly got out of old Sam's trammels before he knew him."

Campbell shortly after left Glasgow, and although, I believe, he returned once or twice afterwards, I never saw him again. I was, of course, nothing to him but one of a knot of raw enthusiastic lads, who adored him. I may say that I never witnessed anything but the utmost propriety in his conduct and language, although I heard rumours to the contrary. He was, bating a slight oath or free expression now and then, a thorough gentleman in his manners. Never has Glasgow College seen since, and is never likely to see again, such a genial, kind-hearted, and attentive Rector. He became one of ourselves, and might be truly called not only the students', but the "*Student* Rector."

To return from this long digression. I came back at the end of the session to my native vale. My mother had removed from the manse, and was residing at a little distance from the village, in a cottage beside a young but extensive plantation, to which I carried my dreams, and where I spent many a delicious solitary hour. It was exceedingly pleasant for me to return across the moorlands to my native place, from the pent-up streets of Glasgow, to see my old valley, under the fresh flush of summer, and to renew acquaintance with my old friends the hills, and especially the streams; for I have always regarded a fine stream as a most eloquent and interesting companion, and have spent days in wandering without any other, submitting myself to all the moods of my associate—leaping when it leapt, murmuring when it murmured, running when it ran, and walking in slow reverie beside it when it fell into a muse, and became sombre and dull in its channel. And when the cloudy and dark day came with winds and rain, I visited my river to see it in all the glory of its turbulence, red in its bed of wrath, and foaming against its banks with very much the same feeling with which, at other times, I have gone to hear a splendid orator upon an occasion which was sure to call forth all his powers, and have repeated Byron's "Velino" by the brink of the stormy waters. I often entertained the desire of walking or sailing up some great river, from the sea to its mountain source; and long ere I heard of Wordsworth's series of Sonnets on the River Duddon, I had projected a succession of Poems on the River Rennie, which I never executed. Another favourite poem of mine at this time was Byron's Lines to the Po, beginning—"River which rollest by the ancient walls," which were dear to me, not only in themselves, but from the "purple light of love" which flushes them, and which suited my mood at the time. I cannot describe the deep romantic interest with which I used to repeat them in my solitary walks.

My studies were not entirely forgotten. I rose every

morning for a while during summer at six, and read a certain number of Greek lines—generally a hundred or two of Homer's Iliad. I wrote also a translation of Lucian's Sale of Lives into English, as a prize essay for Sandford. I had lost, alas! my literary guide and counsellor; but I did not relax my miscellaneous readings. Besides reading extensively in olden theology, and in the classics, I found occasionally time for devouring, as a *bonne bouche*, such works of fiction as I could find—Smollett, Fielding, and some more of the Waverley series. It was this summer, too, that I first read, with care and pleasure, Chalmers' Astronomical Discourses. This formed a kind of era in my life. I felt even then the faults of the style; but in spite, and partly in consequence of these, the book wielded over me a wild charm. In vain was I told by preachers and elder students, that the book was a bad model of style, and reading it a bad preparation for the Logic Class, and that I should read rather MacRie's Life of John Knox, and Hall's Sermons. I replied that I *had* read MacRie, and that I would read Hall, if I had him, but that I could not help reading Chalmers again and again. I remember my father reading to my mother, one morning at breakfast, an extract in a magazine from Hall's Sermon on the death of Dr. Ryland. It was that noble description of the reunion of good men in heaven. He read it with a voice tremulous with admiration, and I thought it the grandest writing I had ever heard. But there was not another scrap of Hall's composition in the house or village. But here *was* Chalmers' *chef-d'œuvre*, and little wonder that I rolled his magnificent speculations like a sweet morsel under my tongue. The thought that it was called wrong to read him made it more delicious; and, after closing some of his high-wrought paragraphs, I ran out with the book in my hand, and gazed at the stars, for which I had hitherto felt only a vague enthusiasm, till Chalmers taught me something of their moral meanings, while he deepened my feeling of their imaginative glory. The book taught, after Fontenelle, the doctrine that

other worlds besides our own were inhabited—a doctrine which, I remember, was then thought still more heterodox by the worthies of our village, than lately by Dr. Whewell. My father, some time before his death, had lent the Discourses to a ruling elder of the kirk. On getting it back, and asking his opinion, all he could get out of the old man was: "Ah! Sir, there are some real nice passages of Scripture at the end." (My readers will remember that Chalmers has added, in an appendix, a number of texts which he thinks support his system.) I have since modified very much my opinion of that work as a piece of argument; but even yet I cannot lift up or look at the old volume, with its half binding, and large sparse clear type from the Collins' press, without a sigh of mingled joy and grief, as it recalls to me a long-vanished past, with all its memories and associations. I have often, in common with others, while writing or reading, felt all of a sudden an intenser and more romantic emotion passing over my mind—felt myself writing or reading with greater delight—and knew not the cause, till I felt in a few minutes that I had been hearing, without being at first aware, some sweet instrumental and vocal melody, which, stealing through, had mingled with and mellowed my feelings; and I have had a similar sensation when a bright sunshine has crept into the room silently and slowly. And so, while reading these Astronomical Sermons, and several other ancient favourites, I seem to myself to be reading them to the accompaniment of some far-off melancholy but sweet and solemn music, swelling out of the depths of twenty years, and in a sad mild sunlight reflected from that autumn day when my father died.

I remember this same summer, or rather autumn, reading a very different book, with very different sensations. This was a volume of Poems by Alexander Rogers, of Glasgow. I do not exactly remember how this volume, which was newly published, had wandered into our remote region, but so it did; and the story of "Peter Cornclips," the song, "Behave

yourself before folks," and the exquisite fragments of Tannahill, which Rogers has finished so admirably, became great favourites with me for a season. They had no high poetry in them, but they were—and the same is true of all the Whistlebinkie* school—very good, as pictures of Scotch national or provincial manners, and are not so far inferior to the poems of Burns as is generally supposed. The power of song-writing and tale-telling exhibited by Rogers, Robert Gilfillan, William Miller, and others, has been undervalued, because, possessed by so many, it has been thought a mere knack rather than a gift. Like the silver in Solomon's day, song-writing has been so plentiful as to be held of no account. Still there is much excellent racy matter in these simple strains, which are, at least, ten times better than the common stilted imitations of Byron and Shelley; which, if small, are true, and which, if they do not always prove great genius in their authors, prove, first, transcendent genius in Burns, who has created a school so large and so natural; and, secondly, great peculiarity, beauty, and interest, in those national customs, national superstitions, and national scenery, of which they are, undoubtedly, faithful daguerreotypes. I once saw Sandy Rogers in the street afterwards, but others of that school in Glasgow I knew none; although I knew well and loved warmly poor David Robertson, their kind-hearted patron and publisher, who was lately so suddenly removed.

It was while still charmed with Rogers' poetry, and perpetually quoting the lines of Tannahill, which he has finished—

> "Tall as the oak on the lofty Benvoirlich,
> Dearer than life to his lovely Neen-Voich"—

that I went, along with a preacher who had been holding forth in the parish kirk, to the Benvoirlich of *our* neighbourhood—Ben-Ample—a mountain of 4,000 feet, towering a little apart from the side of Loch Rennie. It was a dim but lovely autumn day when I found myself wending up the

* "Whistlebinkie;" a school of Scotch song-writers.

same romantic vale which I had last traversed with the lion of St. George's, Edinburgh. The glory of Summer had not wholly left the scenery, but seemed that day drooping her wing, ere she prepared to take her departure. This mild compromise between summer and autumn, when the heat is nearly as great, and the light not much less, but both are sheathed and somewhat saddened—when mist at once drinks and shades the splendour of the sun—when the heather has hung out all her red fairy banners on the heath and in the woods—and when the day seems to sweeten, as it shortens, over yellow corn-fields, and richer, more varied, and mellower skies—was peculiarly dear to my imagination. It suited somehow, too, better with the scenery up which we travelled, which had less beauty than grandeur. As the day advanced, it darkened, with a half-threatening of thunder, which kept clinging, methought, to its craggy clouds, like an eagle, uncertain whether to drop over his precipice upon the plain or not. I think the grandest light in which scenery is ever shown, is the light of

> "That beautiful uncertain weather
> When gloom and glory meet together;"

and when the clouds, before bursting in fury upon the landscape, seem to deck their victim with sacrificial splendours, and there is an unearthly *chiaroscuro*—

> "As when some great painter dips
> His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse."

This day, however, the eagle would not loosen his hold, and the clouds lent the lurid glory, without adding the lightning blow. As we left the sides of Loch Rennie, and turned up the long glen leading to Ben-Ample, it was fine, ever and anon, to stop and look back upon the lake, so dim and beautiful in the shadow—upon the opposite coast, with its green woods and yellow corn—and on the tremendous peaks of the Ross-shire Highlands, bounding the view to the north. As we were panting up the last ascent, we had the provocation to perceive, that just then the mist, which had seemed uncer-

tain hitherto, came suddenly down on the summit of the mountain. We were terribly chagrined. We could now see nothing but the cairn on the summit of the highest of the two tops, and the cold mosses, starred with cranberries, at our feet. Rather sulkily we ate our dinner among the clouds, and wished that the thunder would come and bellow below us, and seam this cold and sullen darkness with fire. But there was not a single peal, and, after delaying a long time in hopes of the mist clearing away, we descended to the plain, and, too late for reaching home, spent the night at a house in a little village half-way.

I remember little more of the end of this autumn, except the peculiar delight with which I enjoyed the moonlight of its evenings. It was to me the "Honeymoon of Moonlight." I never had felt before so fully the unearthly charm of that strange magical radiance—the music of night—appealing to the very deepest poetry in the human soul, and suggesting, now the idea of an ante-natal state, and now that of a future world. I was, or imagined myself to be, in love; and this, no doubt, added to the effect of the "Lady Moon," under whose ray I spent this season many a solitary hour, often composing poetry, while the orb seemed singing to my soul a melody, which I have only sometimes heard long afterwards surpassed, while "Music was pouring" on mortals her "beautiful disdain," from lips and voices which quivered while they sang, as if to the ear of adjacent angels, of "Isles of Beauty,"—of "The English Rose,"—of "The Trysting Hour," "The Heather Bell,"—the "Cameron's Men,"—the "Harp on the Willow-tree,"—of "Music on the Waters,"—of Italy's "dark-eyed daughters,"—of the "Moonlit Sea," and of the "cold grey crags" on which the wave of memory was called, by the poet, to break for evermore. John Scott speaks of strange joys on earth that shall be recognised in higher stages of our existence; and such are the joys of poetry and moonlight in youth, and of music and love at all the seasons of existence. Thousands of sermons have been written on Heaven's love

and Heaven's music, but little has ever been said or sung on the poetry of Heaven, or of that light, brighter than the light of the sun, and more spiritual than that of the moon, which is to rest its eternal smile upon the Better Country.

These delightful dreamings were now to come to an end for a season, and to be exchanged for the hard routine of the Logic Class, as taught in Glasgow. I repaired to it with much more alacrity and hope, however, than to the Greek and Latin. I was eager to launch out upon the *mare magnum* of English composition. I fancied, somehow, that it was there, if anywhere, that I was to get some little credit. I knew I never could make a figure at Greek verses, or at prize poems; but I fancied that I might yet write tolerable essays or sketches. I hied thither, accordingly, about the beginning of November, with a mixture of reluctance and eagerness: reluctance to leave again the valley where every broom-bush was known and dear to me, and to leave my kind friends; and eagerness to mingle in the shock of intellectual arms, which I knew exercised the young warriors under General B——'s command.

As this gentleman is still alive, I shall forbear naming, although I shall try to describe him. He was born, I believe, in the parish of Callender, in Perthshire, and was one of a family of brothers, all more or less distinguished by talent and literature, and who became respectable ministers in the Church of Scotland. R. B. at College stood high: a rather pretentious periodical having been started in the University, he wrote a satirical poem in the mock heroic vein, entitled "The Dawn of Science," which overwhelmed it in effulgence. He subsequently was settled as minister in Peebles, where, at first, he was not popular, because not considered sufficiently evangelical. At length a sagacious elder called on him, and said, "Mr. B., if you winna gie us an evangelical *sermon*, ye micht aye, at least, gie us an evangelical *text*." On this hint he spake, and henceforth he selected texts more from the Gospels or Epistles, and less from the Proverbs and Eccle-

siastes, and became very much admired. He was transferred to Glasgow, to assist and succeed Jardine, in, I think, 1824. He was, certainly, a capital disciplinarian and teacher. He had a keen, sharp, Celtic physiognomy, and was fond of a sly sarcasm. A preacher was once holding forth in the Common Hall of the University on Jonah's prayer from the belly of the whale, and dilating rather long on the emotions of the prophet, who regretted, the preacher thought, in his immurement nothing more than absence from the temple, where he should have been that day." Professor B——, turning round to his nearest neighbour on the professorial bench, whispered: "He has forgotten one important particular; he has told us what Jonah thought and felt—he should have said something about how the whale felt." His mind seemed to be rather a well-furnished and highly-cultured, than a profound, powerful, or original mind. He had, at times, a surface fervour, which at least made his ice dance, if it did not dissolve it. He was clever rather than a large-hearted critic. His sympathies, on the whole, were with the artificial and the conventional: you sometimes suspected that he put on his poetic enthusiasm with his morning cloak. There was, besides, about his manner, style, and matter, too much of the preacher: yet his morning prayers were exceedingly unctional; his recitations of poetry, bating a little of the whine and monotony of the pulpit, were sometimes very effective. I remember him, for instance, repeating Milton's description of the return of the Messiah from creating the world, with much force; indeed, he was the only tolerable reader of poetry I heard, till I heard Wilson. His criticisms on the essays sent in, were, on the whole, comprehensive and just: but his *forte* decidedly lay in examination. He excelled in using the forceps, and bringing out from the student all he knew, often by a series of subtle Socratic questions, and often with a running stream of accompanying sarcasm, which made it a delicious treat to all but the hapless victim; who sometimes, however, did not perceive that he *was* a victim.

B—— was partial, and his favouritism was worse from his efforts to conceal it. He did not despise the blind efforts of aspiring minds—the flutterings of eaglets from their parent crag; but he always seemed to me to prefer too much those in his class who had already taken their set, carved their rut, and were fixed down in a starched mediocrity—a blameless and meritless medium—for the rest of their lives. This premature, Lilliputian manhood, he seemed to think the beginning of a giant growth, but was generally mistaken. The wings of *his* favoured fledgelings never became eagles' wings: mediocrity had from the beginning, and the more in consequence of his praises, "marked them for its own."

Of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Wilson, he spoke occasionally, but although never in an abusive, and sometimes in a laudatory, generally in a deprecatory strain. "They *were* men of genius. Wordsworth described the Lake country beautifully. Wilson was an extraordinary man; and Shelley's system of versification (that of running the lines into each other) was ingenious and peculiar." But he never seemed to see in that school the *promise* of a better era—the bright twilight of a brighter day—the morning stars preceding the rise of a new sun and Shakspere of poetry, who, although not yet risen, must arise: he did not see, in other words, that a period so strange and different as this from the past, must create a poetry and rear poets of its own, and that the Lakers and their followers, if not fully, were approximately the poets of the new time, and, by their comparative failure, had proved the greatness of an object which even they, gifted as they confessedly were, could only partially accomplish. I sometimes fancied that I saw above B——'s head, during his prelections, the shades of Pope and Dryden hovering, and whispering, "Be a good boy now: you command these youths, but we command you; do not praise modern revolutionary geniuses too much, on pain of our immortal displeasure."

I have said all this without any personal feeling. Professor

B—— I respected as a man of high accomplishment, varied knowledge, and strong good-sense, and loved, too, for his kindness to me. I found him at once a just and a merciful critic. If he clipped some of our wings, he acknowledged that we had them, and encouraged us to fly. I took a high prize in his junior side. Better far, I obtained this session from his lips a great addition to my knowledge, and acquired a fluency in composition which has since been of essential service. He followed Jardine's system—a system which involved the practice of perpetual composition: three essays a week for the first part of the session, and, toward the close, the writing of five large themes—a logic essay, the analysis of a part of a classical poem, an exegesis, an oration, and a descriptive essay in verse or prose, at the writer's pleasure. My logic theme was a tissue of hideous bombast, and was cut up accordingly. My exegesis, if I remember aright, was on something about Men of Genius, and was praised. The Professor selected my oration as one of a number to be read, and, with fear and trembling, I read it accordingly. My descriptive essay was a poem on my native scenery, and had sound and fury enough, if little real poetry.

How vividly I remember that happiest of all my College sessions!—the bench (it was number five) where I sat in the class—the figures of the students who were nearest me, as well as those of the more distinguished scattered throughout the hall—the tall form, erect carriage, Roman nose, and horn-like bumps of causality on the brow of C. R. M., now a Missionary in Hindostan—the round, ruddy face and Irish eye of H. W., since the distinguished son-in-law and biographer of the most distinguished Scotch divine of our age—the sturdy, smith-like figure, snub nose, and sagacious face of A. J., the powerful Free-Church champion of Fife—the large brow of P. J., lately the editor of one of our popular periodicals in the West—the thin, active form of B. J., the eminent Hydropathist—the sharp face and worn eyes of G. W., now an English clergyman, and author of a number of well-known

works—the keen yet lady-like features of E. J., now a Professor of Biblical Literature in connexion with a large Dissenting body — the restless countenance and large grey, glimmering eyes of B. C. J., brother of B. S.; the gifted "alchymist"—and the fair hair, wild eye, and broad forehead of G——, the critic! There were other forms and faces less known, but which are as indelibly fixed on my memory—such as that of a tall, raw-boned figure from the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, named T. P., who might have passed for Dominie Sampson in poverty, awkwardness, and unalterable resolution to be a scholar—a thin and thoughtful young man from Stirling, named G. W., who promised to have become a great metaphysician, but who died early—and one M. G., from Ayrshire, who wrote poetry and poetical prose, but who ended, I think, in a parish schoolmaster. It was esteemed a good year, although hardly equal to one which succeeded it, two sessions afterwards, and when Archibald Swinton, Tait of Rugby, and poor Morell Mackenzie, who was lost in the "Pegasus," were the triumvirate of the year.

I spent the next summer in the country again; and it was perhaps the happiest summer I ever enjoyed. I had at the Logic Class obtained a number of new ideas, and a power of easy composition. I employed a good deal of my time in this summer writing essays on Novels, the Scottish Covenanters, and other topics. I had, however, far more pleasure in pursuing trains of internal thought, and building up piles of silent composition, in my walks by the water-sides and among the woods. I never in my life had more enjoyment than while forming some of these internal essays. Having few books and ample leisure, I often spent large portions of my days in this practice. I went out with my stick in my hand — an indispensable requisite. Sometimes, when the weather was unpropitious or my own spirits flat, my vein would not flow, and I returned home miserably disappointed; for I went to this as to my only luxury. At other times, when there was a wind abroad, like an angel struggling

through the woods, or when the divine darkness of an autumn afternoon was resting on the pines and corn-fields half-way up the lofty hills to the south of our valley, or when the grey glory of a breezy autumn day was poured upon the yellow stubble of the plain, or when I wandered among a willowy isle close to the banks of the Rennie, or when I returned from a long walk along the river-side under the shadows of the evening shutting down over Ben-Con and Ben-Darg, then my soul awoke; and selecting some subject, —such as "The Charms of Virtue," "Bombast and its Varieties," "Genius," "No Friendship among the Wicked,"—my thoughts careered on in a rushing torrent, shaping themselves instantly into language, exciting my physical frame to the highest possible pitch, bringing to my brow a flush, to my eyes tears, to my feet as it were wings; in short, I cannot, dare not describe the rapturous enthusiasm which then disturbed, as by a storm, my whole being. When I read "Tintern Abbey," I found in Wordsworth's description of his young raptures at the sight of Nature something reminding me of these early joys. The effusion on "The Charms of Virtue" consisted of a series of bitter satirical invectives against the hypocrisy of a world which pretends to love and praise virtue, while practising every species of vice with greediness. "Bombast and its Varieties" was a sketch of the various classes of literary sins and errors. "Genius" was an ardent defence of that mystic power, and formed, in fact, the key to much in my after literary history. The "boy was father of the man." I care not for the charges of vanity which the recital of these facts may raise against me; enough that they are facts, and that, whatever might be the merit of the compositions produced in these hours—which of course cannot be settled, since they have for ever perished—the memory of the rapture connected with them is what no one can ever deprive me of. I sometimes yet pass along the dyke-side where I composed "The Charms of Virtue," and the bare stony moor where the "Fate of Genius" came on

me; and recal with envy, and would give all I have, to renew the sensations I had then. But, alas! in vain.

"The beautiful is vanish'd, and returns not."

That summer, too, I met with some memorable men whose conversation was profitable to me. My father's place had been filled up by a clergyman whom I shall describe afterwards. But there was a Dissenting chapel vacant in the village, and to supply it various preachers came from time to time. I went often to hear them in the evenings. Some of them used to call on my mother, and I accompanied them frequently in their walks among the hills. There was one S. A., a man of very considerable talent, with a florid face, wild eye, beautiful "style of language," as the simple villagers said of his sermons; with fine, flowing, flowery sermons; much humour, and good-humour too, in private; but reckless, void of caution and principle, and who ultimately died insane and a suicide. He became a minister, I think, in Douglas, Isle of Man, and was for a season very popular there, although much persecuted withal. I have heard many stories of him; one strikes me as worth telling. A little before his death, he called one day on a lady, a member of his church, and requested her to take a walk with him. She was surprised at this, but did not refuse. He led her into the country, and at last requested her to follow him into a wood; and when he reached the depths of it, he asked her to kneel down beside him, which she did, and he proceeded to pour out a prayer which, for beauty, pathos, and grandeur, (it was the prayer of a penitent, such a prayer as a Byron might have used,) she never had heard equalled. It assured her of three things: that he had been a great sinner; that he was a humble penitent; and that his mind was seriously affected. The next news she heard was that of his sad end.

I went with S. A. to Ben-Ample. It was a beautiful May-day, not fully, as a countryman remarked to us on the way, in the "gum of summer," and, therefore, fitter for a

journey. He was a pleasant, nay delightful, companion. He told me much of the ways of Glasgow, of which city he was a native. I remember him speaking of his elocutionary master—Hamilton—whom he described as "Nature's own child." Alas! he was also the child of weakness, and, ultimately, of evil habits. One story about him was exceedingly rich, although very melancholy. Hamilton had agreed to give joint recitations in the Trades Hall, I think, with the well-known dramatist, S. K. When the hour arrived, he was not to be found. A little after K—— had begun, the poor fellow who should have aided him reeled in, very much intoxicated, and seated himself behind the speaker—interposing such remarks audibly as, "*Good!* K——, very good! but borrowed from me!" "Tolerable!" "Bad!" "—— bad!" till he had to be removed. We had a fine walk up the mountain; and, some days after, I parted with S. A., at a little bridge, over a small watercourse some miles east from our dwelling, and returned with sad emotions, and a sort of presentiment of his future fate. He wielded a strange fascination over me, and I watched his future career with much and painful interest: I think, but am not sure, that I saw him afterwards, in the Trongate of Glasgow. I loved him chiefly because he loved literature.

There was another of the same body to whom, also, I took a great liking. His name was James King. He became afterwards a Missionary among the Rocky Mountains. He was a natural sage, the first rude shaping of a Socrates; or —shall I say?—a Burns in mother wit, although not in genius. Genius—fancy—the powers of combination and colouring, as well as learning and acquired logic—he had none; but he was a very mammoth of mother wit—or a colossus of common-sense were as alliterative and as applicable a combination of words. He had a certain short-hand method of getting at the essence of all characters and all subjects. His nature, in its homely width, seemed to adjust itself to all varieties of company and of character, like the

wind, which waves to, blows around, retreats from, advances up, strikes or kisses, all it meets. Not himself a poet, he could not help loving poetry and poets. He had a racy vein of sarcasm, which was fed by an extensive knowledge of human nature, and a little embittered by disappointment. Of me he said kind things when a kind thing was valuable, and his praise was long a solitary ray of sunshine on my humble head. I took him to all the points of our scenery, and enjoyed his keen and sensible talk on men and things very much. I met him afterwards in Edinburgh, and renewed pleasant intercourse with him, and also with his friend, D. J., whom I had met in the country—a man of a more refined mind, and who possessed a passionate attachment to literature. King, poor fellow! died very suddenly in his foreign mission. How well I remember his tall clumsy form, his big brow, sagacious face, and broad Lowland accent!

This delightful summer was now drawing to a close. I paid in October a parting visit to Ben-Ample, along with the preacher who had formerly climbed it with me, when the mist spoiled the prospect. We went up this time, not by Loch Rennie, but through Glen Conochie; the yellow woods now shining and rustling in the windy sunshine of an autumn day, and the deer appearing on the remoter heaths. We turned north, out of Glen Conochie, into a wide waste valley, full of mosses and quagmires, across which we had to bound with short and springy footstep. It was a relief to find ourselves climbing the firm steep sides of Ben-Ample. This day there was no mist, but a strong wind was blowing, and we could not stop long to admire the magnificent view of gleaming lakes, billowy mountains, vast winding hollows; the tremendous Schrecktoron standing up across a little glen as if to rival Ben-Ample, and resembling a rhinoceros swollen into a mountain, with a horn on its nose, snuffing the wind. We returned in the late evening, very tired.

And now came College-time. On my road to Glasgow I stopped a few days at a friend's in a town half-way, and

there I procured from the library some old volumes of *Blackwood*, containing Wilson's papers on "Streams," "Cottages," "A Glance at Selby's Ornithology," and the best of the "Noctes." The impression produced on my mind was exciting, electrifying, intoxicating. I remember that one night, after reading, I think, "Cottages," and "Selby," I could not sleep, but lay awake till long past midnight in a rapt reverie, composing a description of the scenery of my own native place, in my own style, but coloured a little by the papers I had been reading; or, to speak more correctly, all the scenery of Strath-Rennie came rushing in words upon my view. It was the most glorious night I ever spent; and, when morning arrived, I renewed my reading of the inspiring page. How I revelled in those superb pictures of the golden eagle! its grandeurs and terrors hushed in half-slumber upon the crag; the mighty wings which had, since morning, swept a hundred straths, folded up and quiet; the eye which had outstared the sun sealed up in sleep!—of the raven, the mountain misanthrope, sitting silent as an unopened page of the iron Book of Fate in his grim glen, or seen rising slowly and heavily, gorged with human flesh!—and, in "Cottages," of the "Giant of the Hut of the Three Torrents," now seated serene, with his white hair glittering in the sun, before his cottage, and now fallen, through the "barley-bree," like a felled oak, low but mighty still, on a couch which Nature herself had prepared to break his fall; a couch of bonnie blooming heather! I had met no writing which, in its wild freedom, its uncontrollable power, its magnificent divergencies and errors, pleased me so much. It was just the race of a wild deer along the sides of Ben-Ample; it was just one of the tameless torrents of my own hills, wailing or laughing by. I believe that the accidental reading of these volumes greatly accounted for my dissatisfaction with the prelections of the Moral Philosophy Class to which I was bound. Had I gone, as I did afterwards, to Wilson's feet instead of James Milne's, it had been different. The friend with whom I was living

reproved me for my enthusiasm, and set me to reading Dr. Brown's Lectures, and into their splendid maze accordingly I went, and with much pleasure: but still, reading him I found at that time a task; reading Wilson, an exquisite enjoyment.

Arrived at Glasgow, I lost no time in joining Milne's Moral Philosophy Class, and soon became interested, if not very much in the study, much in the idiosyncrasy of my Professor. He was a fine-minded old man; clear, original, acute, but cold rather—at all events, careless. At the morning hour, to which he came sometimes scarcely dressed, he seldom seemed fully awake; yet the snorings of his slumber were often noble. Brummell's valet said that his master always "snored like a gentleman;" so old Milne always snored like a genius—of metaphysics. What a fine clear system he built up year after year, from the first faint sensations of the infant, to the poet's dream of immortality, and the philosopher's theory of God! He scouted transcendentalism; he was not versed in the poetry of metaphysics; his views seldom tapered away into the subtle, and never towered into the sublime. But he was the ideal of a clear, strong, ingenious intellectualist; without passion, without imagination, without faith, with little force, and with less feeling. His lectures were masterly in matter, careless in style and in manner of delivery; but he once read us an early Essay written by him on Beauty, developing the theory of Alison, which had been formed by him previously and on independent grounds, and which was written so tenderly, elegantly, in a style so chastely yet richly adorned, that the class were taken by surprise, and, contrasting it with his ordinary prelections, could solve the problem in no other way than by supposing, that when he wrote it he had been in love. He showed sometimes that he could appreciate genius, and read the good poetry that was (very rarely) handed in to him, with much *gusto;* and you were delighted when the metaphysician, in your sight, was transfigured into a man. He

was, if common report did not belie him, although a clergyman, a sceptic; and, indeed, he set himself, in a quiet but effectual way, to shake the belief of his students. He openly denied and argued against eternal punishment, and sneered at some of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity besides. Few came away from his class without sharing, more or less, in the infection, if not of his actual doubts, at least of his cold, sceptical, materialistic spirit. The Moral Philosophy Class was a kind of ice-bath, in which we shivering novices were plunged; some of the weaker perishing, and even the stronger more chilled than strengthened by the operation. I have heard eminent Doctors of Divinity confessing that, years after they had entered the ministry, the recollection of some of Milne's half-hinted doubts, sly suggestions, words where more was meant than met the ear, came back at times upon them, and threatened to darken their faith and paralyse their exertions. Milne, by the way, was the uncle of the notorious Frances Wright, the lady lecturer, who did so much, in America and elsewhere, to propagate infidelity, but who, ere she died, came to sounder views, and keenly regretted her early aberrations. He had once got into trouble from his political opinions. About the time of Napoleon's return from Elba, he had in the Common Hall, of which he was then the stated preacher, delivered a sermon which was thought to savour of Buonapartism, and had given out at the close the paraphrase, "Behold *he* comes—your *leader* comes." Political feeling was then running high in Glasgow, and Milne was summoned to account for his discourse, and even for the paraphrase he had sung. He proved, we believe, that he had preached the same sermon and given out the same hymn years before; it might have been, of course, with a different *animus* and object: but still the scent would not hold, and the bloodhounds had to quit the track. As a preacher, he sometimes approached the verge of very high eloquence. His sermons were too philosophical, but they were carefully composed, elegant in language, and occasionally very effective:

one on the text, "Ponder the path of thy feet," was, we understand, a masterpiece of sound wisdom, chaste fervour, and happy illustration. Altogether he was a noble nature, frost-bitten by scepticism, counteracted by indolence; and has left nothing whatever to perpetuate his name. Farewell "Old Sensation," as thy students called thee!. Well I knew thee, and owe thee a debt of considerable gratitude!

In his class I did nothing except study my teacher, and get acquainted with some of his students. I shall here record the characters of two or three of the more remarkable. My principal intimate this session and the next was B. G., a student from Ayrshire. He was a thin, pale-faced little lad, looking ten years older than he was, well known as a capital Latin scholar, but only two or three of his friends were aware of his really extraordinary acquirements and his subtle metaphysic faculty. He knew more for his age than any person ever I met; was a thorough Latin, French, and Greek scholar; had read enormously in science, literature, philosophy, and history; and had a clear, searching intellect. His deficiency was imagination. He could with his intellect span the heavens, but no rainbow-colours flashed along the arch. He sympathised, however, warmly with certain imaginative authors. He taught me to relish Godwin and Shelley, against whom I had strong prejudices. It was at his lodging that I first saw Wilson's review in *Blackwood* of the "Revolt of Islam;" the extracts from which struck me so forcibly that I made B. G. procure me the poem from the College-library; and I read it with rapture. I learned more *facts*, and more about philosophic theories, from this poor, pale, ill-dressed lad, than from any source which ever opened on me. He was anxious to get me to curb my fancy, or at least to ballast it better with analytic thought than I was inclined to; and our talks were generally turned by him into the channel of metaphysics. Day after day we paced up those College-green walks Scott has described in "Rob Roy" —walks shaded with trees, and passing amidst extensive fields,

through which a dull stream, called the Molendinar, wound its Lethean current. It was winter; and the scene, although diversified by merry groups of red-gowned students, and occasionally by ladies, the wives or daughters of the professors, was sufficiently dreary. Yet there are few scenes I have ever revisited, after long absence, with more pleasure, more of the "joy of grief," than those old walks, where B. G. and I talked down hours to moments on such themes as the Infinite Evil of Sin, the Catholic Claims (it was the question of the day), and similar topics. It was pure, naked, intellectual gladiatorship, familiar to him by habit, but on which I entered with all the delight of one who finds himself in a new element, and finds that element to be more congenial to him than he had supposed.

B. G. was not, as I said, a man of genius, scarcely what could be called a brilliant man. Many thought him a mere compound of memory and skin! He was shrewdly suspected to be a little sceptical. He had read the Encyclopædists of France, the *Edinburgh Review*, and Godwin's "Political Justice" too much and too sympathisingly. He lent me, I remember, that strange book of Godwin's, as well as "Caleb Williams." I began this novel in the evening —read on, in my own little chamber, till the candle went out at one of the most interesting parts of the story. The house was fast asleep, and I had to digest my disappointment and go to bed. I rose early next day, and finished it. It seemed to me, as it still does, the opening up of a virgin vein of greater depth than width. There was a startling combination in it of a cold materialistic philosophy with warm passion and imagination. The voice was Jacob's—the hands were those of Esau. The theories were those of my Professor, James Milne; the writing was often as powerful as that of Burke, and the interest as riveting as that of Scott's best novels. I passed from "Caleb Williams" to Godwin's other tales, with inferior but great relish; and from him to Brockden Brown, whose "Wieland" and "Arthur Mervyn" struck

me greatly. I even meditated and began a tale in a similar style, but never finished it.

I was at the end of this session separated from B. G., and only met him once again, years afterwards, at ———. He had gone in the meantime to the Divinity Hall, and become more religious in the tone of his mind. If he had not ceased to doubt, he had put his doubts under strong suppression, and was anxious now not to doubt, but to believe. We compared notes together on this and other subjects during a delightful walk. I, too, as I shall have to tell hereafter, had had my deep difficulties during and after my intimacy with him; but I had in the interim been studying divinity too; had begun to feel satisfaction in the study; and the longer I had looked at the glory of the subject, the spots had seemed to diminish in number and in size. Thus, too, my friend felt; and he seemed entirely to have changed his course of study, and to have applied himself to Christian authors. We talked much, too, about our old companions, and about our future prospects. I read him a sermon I had composed, which he professed to like; but hinted that I had not pursued my metaphysical studies or my practice of careful and thoughtful composition so much as I ought to have done; and in reference to its uniform luxuriance, said, I should remember that a "table-land was just a plain." I parted with him thereafter, and met him no more on earth. Poor B. G.! one year afterwards I saw thy name in the cold, common obituary of a newspaper! May we meet again in some "mild sphere," and renew our conversations, and mingle our intellectual joys! *Vale!*

There was a strange student of the same year, named D. J., who passed for crazy, and whose manner, through its gross affectation, made him the laughing-stock of the students. The last thing I heard of him was that he had retired to one of the romantic islands of the Hebrides, and was begging sixpences from strangers. There was another, called D. W., who passed for a genius with some, through his

assurance, assumed eccentricity, and boundless affectation. I remember him spouting a splendid oration in the Logic Class, which I recognised as stolen bodily from a speech of Brougham's. When I charged him with the theft, he denied it, and said coolly that if there were any resemblance, it must be from the coincidence of his mind to that of the great senator. He wrote a note to Professor Milne, excusing his not performing the prescribed exercises, on account of the "invincible, incessant, and ineradicable laziness of his nature." The Professor kept up a running fire of satire on him, for this, all the rest of the session. He went to study under Wilson at Edinburgh, and astonished the modern Athenians by his manner in the street, where he often appeared as if rapt in profound reverie, and with folded arms; till stumbling against a gentleman or lady, he started, bowed, and cried, "Beg pardon, madam, I was thinking." He *ought* to have been acquainted with another fool of the first head, C. Doyne Sillery, the once well-known poetaster, who was wont to run into coffee-houses, and say, "Waiter, bring me a sheet of paper immediately; I have got an idea." D. W. had money, and, I think, returned to his native town, somewhere in Dumfries-shire, and lived in a lonely and half-crazy sort of style. He had, certainly, talent, but it was not strong enough to bear the heavy burden of his affectation.

I remember, as one of the characters at College, a strange, morbid youth, with dull yet dreamy eyes, a cadaverous countenance, and dirty, dishevelled appearance, who spent all the hours he could steal from his classes in haunting dissecting-rooms. He visited them, not so much in search of information, as from an unnatural delight in the smells issuing from such places. He actually seemed to snuff the tainted air, as if it were laden with the "arrowy" odour of beds of frankincense and myrrh. B. G. and I christened him the "stinking philosopher;" and I remember saying, "Look there, G., there's a practical illustration of Pantheism; that poor fellow finds a stench to be as divine as to others

seems an Arabian gale with all its spices." I did not then know Emerson and Carlyle, else they had been made right welcome to this additional evidence of the truth of their sublime system! The poor "stinking philosopher" was not long in furnishing his quota to those smells he loved so dearly; his morbid taste had sprung from bodily distemper, and he died during one of the recesses of College.

There was another mysterious character in the University one session at this time. This was a large lean lad—the largest and leanest man I ever saw—with dark but short-cropped hair, a swinging, rapid walk, and a face almost completely buried in big blue spectacles. This person attended several of the classes, but no one knew his name. We called him the "Genius of the Anonymous." He came most punctually to the lecture, speaking to no one, and stalked up to a seat in a remote part of the class-room, where he sat moveless as a pillar, with nothing visible about him save his glasses, and a grin that dwelt, as if carved, on the lower part of his face. When retiring, he was not unfrequently dogged by some of the students; but he seemed aware of it, and, by doubling and plunging into obscure lanes, he always contrived to elude them. Sometimes, especially when the Catholic Question was being discussed, he appeared at the principal debating societies, and sat silent, but evidently much interested in the debates. Once, and once only, he seemed about to speak. A student had just delivered a powerful speech against the Catholics, which seemed to produce a great sensation. Suddenly the unknown sprang to his feet in a state of great excitement—his hands clenched—his tall form expanded to its utmost height—the glasses gleaming a "blue lowe" above—and the grin becoming terrific below. All eyes were instantly fixed upon him—all hearts were beating thick. "What voice or language *can* issue from the lips of this strange inscrutability?" seemed the universal query. The silence was profound, when the words

"Master Chairman," in a strong Irish accent, broke from him. Something in the tone of the voice, coupled with the excessive excitement of the man, produced a ludicrous sensation in the audience. This vented itself in a roar of laughter, which so disconcerted or so irritated the "Genius of the Anonymous," that, without adding another word, he lifted his hat, and strode indignantly out of the room, amidst loud laughter and ironical cheers. From that hour he was seen at College no more. Various speculations were, as usual, formed about him and the causes of his disappearance. The general opinion was, that he was an Irish Jesuit. A student, after his disappearace, said, that he had one night encountered the unknown in the Gorbals, in company with a lady. He had watched and followed, and was near enough to overhear her reproaching him bitterly, and him doing all he could to soothe her. He lost sight of them on turning the corner of a street. Shortly after, all Glasgow was startled by the news of a lady, who was found, in a mean lodging in the Gorbals, strangled in her bed. It was found that a gentleman, answering to the description of the "Anonymous" student, had procured a lodging for her there, and often visited her. One night cries and shrieks were heard in the apartment. The neighbours delayed inquiring into the cause till morning, when, bursting in, they found the poor young lady, who seemed of English extraction, dead. They made hue and cry after the murderer, but in vain. They found out his lodging, but his landlady knew nothing of him but that he paid his bills, and was a quiet, decent *lad*, although often from home. There were flying rumours afterwards of his having been seen in Greenock, in Belfast, and in New York, but nothing was ever accurately ascertained; the Junius of the Ethic Class remained undiscovered, and still "stat nominis umbra."

I have alluded to debating societies. These, in my day, were in rather a flourishing condition, and I not unfrequently

attended, although I rarely spoke, at their meetings. I remember one singular scene. In a debate on Phrenology, the well-known A. S., now of Edinburgh, stood up in defence of the science, and spoke in rather a conceited, although fluent and dashing style. He was a relative of Sir Walter Scott; and how we raw Glaswegians stared at him as he described a meeting with the "Great Unknown," on whose rich conversation, quotation of poetry, and "immense head," he dilated with much gusto—adducing especially his organ of veneration as a proof of phrenology. The speech made a decided sensation. C. R. M., mentioned above as now a Missionary in India, rose and delivered a most elaborate reply, which somewhat counteracted the effect of the speech. But just as (*magna componere, &c.*) the best reply to Burke's "Reflections" was not Mackintosh's "Vindiciæ Gallicæ," but Tom Paine's "Rights of Man," so the real reply to S—— was to come, not from refined metaphysical speculation, but from rough common-sense. There sat in the top of the crowded class-room a tall, thin, long-visaged, spectral, and withal rather stupid-looking man, named S. P., now, I think, a clergyman in some Dissenting church in Lanarkshire. This man had what Burns calls "a strong inkneed kind of a soul," an acute although uncultured mind, and a great deal of humour as rough as his sagacity. He was just a mass of roaring, robust common-sense; passed with puppies or asses for an ass; but, while the cleverer appreciated his merit, *all* were delighted to see him rise; for a treat they never failed to expect and to receive. He spoke at the pitch of a very powerful voice, and poured out a torrent of blended sense and nonsense, made many shrewd remarks, and drew some most diverting pictures. On this occasion his uprise had been waited for most impatiently, and many a cry of "S. P." had been uttered to rouse him to his legs. At last up he sprang; and certainly if S——, as is possible, had never heard of him before, and judged of him at first only by his broad Scotch accent and

homely appearance, he must have thought it was the miracle of Balaam's ass renewed. He took hold of his fine flimsy oration, and, amidst roars, screams, shouts of laughter, rent it in a thousand pieces. He turned the whole splendid melodramatic scene of the meeting with Scott, which S—— had described, into unmitigated ridicule. He said he would as soon consult "a man's hands as his head in order to find out his mental powers." He drew a laughable picture of veneration as the "attic story, the garret of the brain," and of the "state of the poor religious faculty sitting cold and shivering there." He rose to rough eloquence even when taking "Old Mortality" as an illustration of Scott's bump of veneration, and diverged to a glowing panegyric on the heroic Covenanters. I despair giving my readers any idea of the sensation this queer speech produced. S—— eyed the speaker through a golden quizzing-glass; affected contempt—whispering, it was said, to his next neighbour, "He's an inspired idiot;" but felt it very keenly. I thought of a fine lady's dress, bespattered with filth from the hoofs of a furious bull, rushing past her in the street. It was, I think, S——'s first and last exhibition in a debating society. Far otherwise with S. P.; he continued for some years after to be the glory and the laughter of the debating societies, and no debate was thought worth listening to unless at some point of the evening or other he rose and delivered one of his racy and uproarious orations. A year or two after, there appeared one of a similar make and similar eccentricity, robust S. R., afterwards a clergyman in Glasgow, and ultimately in Nova Scotia, who for a while divided the popularity and halved the ridicule which had befallen his kindred spirit, S. P.

I left the College this spring rather disconsolate. I had taken no prize; rather neglected the business of the class, although I had profited by my intercourse with B. G. I returned home, and spent a dull and disagreeable summer. My mind had not the same elasticity as on the former season,

I walked, indeed, by my old rivers, and carried my old stick with me; but it was the staff of Elisha in Gehazi's hands, and could not conjure any more. I met this year a person of great reputed talent, a preacher named Y. J., but did not take so much to him as I expected. He was a clever, sagacious man, but had become soured with disappointment, spoiled with sullen self-conceit; and his opinions of men and authors were, I thought, the reverse of true. He attacked the Lake school savagely; admitted Wordsworth to be a true poet, but thought him crazy; and ignored Shelley and Coleridge altogether. I repeated to him Coleridge's "Ode to Mont Blanc," and Shelley's "Cloud," and had the mortification to find them falling flat. It *was* casting pearls before swine, although I had been taught to consider Y. J. as rather a seraphic intelligence than anything else. Pollok's "Course of Time" was a favourite subject of his abuse. Some of his objections were just and well put; others the mere ravings of spite. He called the "Byron" of Pollok a piece of "big-mouthed talk." He objected to the expression in it applied to ocean, "hoary locks," because Byron had said—

> "Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;"

in my notion, a very captious objection. Byron's idea of ocean is that of an old but unwrinkled countenance; and over such a face "hoary locks" may be lawfully represented as floating. He objected to the image of the comet—

> "Like some fierce comet of tremendous size,
> To which the stars did reverence as it passed;"

and said, "Think of a star bowing!" To this I ventured to say: "Now, Mr. J——, this will never do; how could any poetry, or poetical prose, stand such a test?" In short, we did not pull together, and I began, ere all was done, to think my seraph a mass of self-complacent conceit. He had some good sermons, but spoiled himself by a bad delivery, and his

voice was husky. He was latterly discovered to be a systematic plagiarist; which was, indeed, in perfect keeping with his dark, dungeon-like nature. He affected oracular utterances, and said, sometimes, really clever things. Many, however, of his sayings, as well as of his sermons, were pilfered. He was, altogether, a singular example of a man of ordinary abilities, half-soured and half-spoiled; soured by the neglect of the general public, and spoiled by the flatteries of cliques, coteries, and the "minnows who thought him a Triton."

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CHAPTER III.

EDINBURGH.

At the close of this season, I went to attend the Moral Philosophy Class in Edinburgh. I came to Edinburgh up the Frith from Stirling on a fine October afternoon, and saw that splendid scene to the greatest advantage. A hoary light suited well that scene of antique grandeur, that magnificent mountain-city—

"Stately Edinborough throned on crags."

I felt especially, or deemed I felt, "no common glow," when I stood under the shadow of the frowning brows of the Castle, bending over the Grass-market, and I thought of the Covenanters and the "Heart of Mid-Lothian." I reserve for an after-part of this volume a few remarks on Edinburgh, in its manners, morals, and literature; but this is the place to record the boundless enthusiasm with which I then, and still, regard the scenery around it. Haydon's first exclamation when he saw it conveyed very much my impressions, "A Giant's Dream." It seemed as if it had been built to some unearthly music, or after a model suspended in the clouds, and formed by the hands of Air and Sunshine. Stone and rock seemed here moulded in the express image of genius, and nature and art were apparently reconciled. Religion, too, had hung up toward the glowing west the dome of St. George's, as if challenging the whole proud city as her own. I revelled in the glories of the town and its environs; now standing on Arthur's Seat, and admiring the blue Pentlands, and the far-

off hills of Lammermuir; now sitting on Mons Meg,* and watching a thunderstorm coming up from Rob Roy's country to deluge the Frith with darkness and with fire; now leaning over the North Bridge at evening, and looking to the dome of St. George's, relieved against a fading autumn sky; and now from Salisbury Crags contemplating, for a long hour, the ruined splendour of a summer-day in a sunset, which a hundred ordinary sunsettings seemed combined to produce—the rapid shiftings of cloudy shapes—the flushings and fadings of colour—the aërial mimicry of the scenes below visible in the heavens—castles arising suddenly, to subside for ever—blue Grampians piled up and pulled down in a moment of time—rocks of ragged, tumbling into seas of molten, gold—the sun sinking out of the sight of all this "agony of glory," but sending up his last beams, to see the end—and a stern grey twilight casting a shroud over the memory of the day and its deathbed, on which the moon arose and poured a congenial ray. Such scenes, as well as the sight of the old town sleeping at midnight in the silence of the pale planet, were to me unspeakably dear; because, more fully than even my native scenery, combining the presence of nature, of art, and of that union between the two which we call poetry. How I sometimes wished to have Aladdin's Lamp, so that I could have transferred this stately city, or one of similar architecture, to my own native valley, and seen the mountains of Strath-Rennie standing in their bold towering lines of 3,000 feet, around the Modern Athens—dreams of mountains guarding a dream-city! In dreams, indeed, I have often compounded the varied elements of known and familiar scenes into new and gorgeous wholes; adding the loveliness of one glen to the grandeur of another, placing the mountains of one strath beside the long friths of others, introducing the roar of Staffa amidst the grim gorge of Glencoe, and piling some of my favourite hills on each

* "Mons Meg;" the old cannon so called, which lies on the half-moon battery in the Castle of Edinburgh.

other's heads, till they became snowless Andes with heather blooming up to their very summits. "Such tricks hath strong imagination!" and in these bright visions, up to this hour, the scenery of Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth very frequently recurs, forming a kind of artistic centre to the wilder and more romantic glories which memory and fancy combine out of my early or recent impressions, or out of my readings. In that dream-land I have pictures, made by my own heart, of most of the famous scenery of the world; a Tempe of my own, a Mont Blanc of my own, sterner glaciers, hotter and higher Heclas, prairies of wider billow, and Niagaras of deeper sound. How often have I awaked, weeping with joy or with sorrow, from such night-spectacles—joy at the retrospect of the vision, and sorrow that it had passed away! I have no dreams I so much enjoy, or in which I find or fancy a better omen, than in those of beautiful scenes, although the effect has sometimes been to disappoint me with the sight of the actual realities of the natural world; and Foyers and Dunkeld have been again and again dwindled and darkened, because I saw them side by side with imaginary cataracts and night-built hermitages. I never needed to resort to any stimulus, or particular kind of food to produce splendid dreams; in my earliest and healthiest days they came unbidden, and stood beside my couch in their beauty, their grandeur, or their terror. This I attribute greatly to the fact, that I was born in a district of country which saturated and steeped fancy in bold and beautiful forms.

In Edinburgh I did nothing, for two or three months, besides attending the class, but read in very diversified directions. I got access to one or two good libraries; and, from these, I culled the works that I thought most congenial: I fed, not upon rule, but wherever my literary appetite impelled me. I set out with the determination to read no books but those possessing merit of some kind or other; yet I tried to act upon a principle of intellectual

catholicity; and while I read Butler's "Analogy," and "Owen on the Hebrews," in the mornings, in the evenings I devoured the "Beauties of Shelley," or Hazlitt's "Spirit of the Age." I must say, however, that while I found reading the former dry work, I relished the latter with exquisite delight. The wild wailing music, the dreamy pomp of imagination, the gorgeous tulip-like language, the bar of unearthly sorrow and unearthly sweetness in its utterance which ran through the whole,—these fascinated me in the poems of Shelley. I seemed to hear the melodious cries of Ariel, from the centre of that cloven pine "where he howled away twelve winters." There was something, too, in the glimpse Campbell had given me of the strange manners and appearance of the poet, that charmed and melted me. I thought of one of those sons of God who had lost heaven for the sake of the daughters of men, and who continue, it is said, to wander over this world, wondering at its coarse corruptions, falsehoods, and miseries, stumbling against its stern laws, admiring all its beautiful objects, panting after the celestial land they have left, but not having resolution or grace to undergo the purgation which could alone fit them to return to it—

"Too bad for heaven, too good for hell;

and, for earth, at once too bad and too good!

To Hazlitt I went, also, with deep interest. He had been in youth a hero-worshipper, and, in spite of himself and of his heroes, had continued to worship to the last. His "First Acquaintance with Poets." pleased me beyond expression. I carried it (I found it in an odd volume of the *Liberal*) with me to the Meadows, and there read and re-read it till its every line was stamped on my memory and my heart. It revived a thousand old associations, and I blended the experiences of the minister's son at Wem, Shropshire, with those of the minister's son at Strath-Rennie, and did my best to fancy that I had "entertained" there Coleridges "unawares." The picture, at any rate, of the solitary ambitious boy living

in his early dream-land, till disturbed by a shock of power and genius, like an Avatar visiting his native valley,—that, at any rate, I appropriated to myself; although to him it came more from one transcendently-gifted man, and to me from a succession of influences, including the charms of scenery, and the powers of the varied books which had stirred my sleeping soul, and surprised me into life and hope. I admired, too, this author's genius, in its combination of the solid and the brilliant—elements not, indeed, well-harmonized together, through his want of culture, but existing in great abundance. Two of his peculiarities were exceedingly dear: his love of poetry, and his passion for the past. How I joyed when I read his glowing pictures of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspere, and all the older bards! I have again and again pressed his "Lectures on the British Poets" to my heart, in a similar mood as when, reading Shelley's description of the retreat of Laon and Laone from the battle-field, I burst into tears. And then Hazlitt's love for the past, in preference to the present or the future, was so much in keeping with my feelings then, and far more now, when, in the language of poor Thomas Pringle,

"Sick of the present, I turn to the past;"

or, as Bulwer has it in his "Lament of the Last Faun"—

"I dream of the past alone."

But now for my recollections of Christopher North. I went with a friend to hear his opening lecture. The hall was crowded. I was struck by the difference between the appearance of the students I had known in Glasgow, and those in Edinburgh; the one class wearing shabby red gowns over shabbier coats, the other dressed in the mode of the day, and, to my notion, desperately like puppies. One or two of my old Glasgow contemporaries were among them; and it was ludicrous to observe the 'change' which had come "o'er the spirit" of their dress—the chains, ringlets, and satin waistcoats, which had supplanted the dirty uniform of the west;

not to speak of their accent, which, from broad Gorbals, had become a curious hybrid of Edinburgh and mangled English. I felt partly shame, when I compared my own "clouterly carcase" with theirs; but far more, I felt contempt and pity. They were become so pompous, and so consequential withal! I turned from them in disgust, and awaited the entrance of the great Professor. At last Wilson advanced, in all his shaggy majesty. I was amazingly struck with the first appearance of the man: he ought, I thought, to have come bursting out upon us, not from a class-closet, but from some old primeval forest—from among the mighty pines of Ballochbowie, or the thick umbrage of the woods of Mar. His hair at that time was long, bushy, and without, as yet, a white streak visible. He must have been about forty-four years of age: in the very prime of his majestic manhood. His eye was a torch of fire, his step elastic, his face beaming with health, his form and figure erect and fully expanded; and I almost started when I heard first the strange, wild, deep accents of his voice, in the words, "Moral Philosophy, Gentlemen." Yet I must confess that I listened to the lecture with deep disappointment; I thought the manner coarse, and, at the same time, unnatural and affected. The matter struck me as rather mystical than profound, and the style sustained itself by heaving effort, rather than ran on smoothly and strongly in the fine free channels of inspiration, like his style in *Blackwood*. He seemed labouring in an atmosphere unsuitable to him, and you thought of an eagle writhing, not waving his wings in a vacuum. The audience, many of whom had heard him often before, received him with prodigious enthusiasm; but I went home, I must confess, thinking of the words of a singular student in Glasgow, who, talking of Wilson, said: 'I think that man is a fool; and that if he was na sic a *big fool*, he would be laughed at." Indeed, meeting some of his admirers immediately after lecture, I myself said some strong things to a similar effect, of the memory of which I am now heartily ashamed.

The great man *grew* on me as I continued to attend his class. I found that what I thought coarseness was simply the shaggy mane of the lion, and that the roar, though peculiar, was intensely his own; that his knowledge of metaphysics was more extensive than I had at first deemed; and that, if he did not add much to what I had previously learned at Glasgow, he gave his students what no Professor there could give,—the benefits of the inspiration of his own powerful genius. I heard his lectures with deeper and deeper delight; and, long ere he reached the grand closing plea for the Immortality of the Soul, I was completely converted to his manner of delivery, as well as to the more substantial merits of his prelections. I laughed with him in his inimitable picture of the miser; I shuddered as he painted the sublime sufferings sublimely endured by the Indian prisoners; I felt a thrill, "lifting my skin from the scalp to the ankles," as he figured Cæsar in his "fading manhood," weeping at the tomb of Alexander, who had done so much more in his glorious youth; I saw that eye of his stilled like a summer sea, and heard his voice sinking like a subsiding billow, as he uttered the words, "the melancholy main;" my blood rose to the trumpet-like energy with which he pealed out the description by Scott of the landing of the British in Portugal; I heard him analyse beauty like a philosopher; describe conscience, that "phantom censor" seated in the breast, like a poet; and expound the nature of faith like a theologian. Even when he was poor and tedious, I loved to sit and listen to the slow swell of his voice, lingering amidst its own grand sounds, as to the cadence of the wind among pines, or of the ocean breaking on midnight shores. I enjoyed the humours of the class as conducted by him, and his personal eccentricities, exceedingly. His abrupt and fiery entrance into the class-room; the habit he had of glaring out, at the end of every paragraph, through the window on the right-hand side; the watch laid out before him, and, when the lecture was poor, glanced at every five minutes, in his impatience to be done; the huddle of loose

Sibylline leaves which he called, facetiously, notes of his lecture; the hawkings and hammerings of his occasional embarrassment; the glancings of his eye, opening wide, as if to embrace the whole class; the exquisitely comic looks he sometimes cast around when any odd incident occurred, or any odd character entered the room; the fierceness or the fun with which, according to his mood, he put down any disturbance (once, we remember, crying out to a person in a corner of the class-room who had been annoying him, with a look and tone of indescribably ludicrous scorn, which threw the class into a roar of laughter: "Little Jack Horner sits in that corner!" and often smiting his huge fist on the desk and producing dead silence in a moment); and the broad rollicking manner he assumed when he told his students some anecdote of his own youth, or encouraged them in snowball fights, adding once, "May I be there to see!"—these are only a few of the many hundred traits of character which, at the distance of twenty-four years, rush back upon my recollection.

I confess to a considerable degree of trepidation when I first found myself alone, for a few minutes, in the antechamber of his class, with Christopher North, while procuring my ticket from him. He was very civil and cordial, but along with the ticket gave me a look which seemed to sound my very soul. He asked whence I came; and when I told him, he exclaimed, "Ha! magnificent scenery there! I passed through that village once, but in too great a hurry to see the country to advantage." I had no further intercourse with him till some months later, after I had written some essays by which he was pleased, and asked me to call on him. I embraced an early opportunity to do so, and spent some delightful hours at 6, Gloucester Place. He poured out, in the course of an evening or two, more ideas, more fiery imagery, more acute remarks, and with more ease than any converser I ever heard, Campbell not excepted. I can give but a very inadequate idea of his conversation. He began by talking of the difference between the scenery of the Lakes

and that of the Highlands;—"the one soothed the soul, the other overwhelmed it; you went to the one as to a pleasure, to the other as to some great task. He felt always at first a kind of awe when he found himself fairly enclosed in those grim gates of mountains. Visiting the Lakes was like reading Gray or Beattie; visiting the Highlands was like reading Milton or Dante." I asked him if he had seen Switzerland. He said, "No, nor did he wish, any more than to visit Brobdignag or the Mountains of the Moon. Those great snowy wastes seemed to him uninteresting and shocking both. What was Mont Blanc, after all, but a Brobdignagian snow-ball, an exaggerated common-place? He preferred the heath and the ferns of auld Scotland, and, like Sir Walter, he thought if he did not see the heather once a-year he would die. Switzerland would make him mad." I questioned him about Coleridge, whose "Friend" and "Biographia Literaria" I had been reading. He seemed reluctant to speak of him as a man—saying that he hoped "the root of his perpetual bitterness, at the time he knew him, was nothing but the poppy; and that, although he had not seen him for years, he believed he was mellowed down into a different being." He spoke of his genius, however, with great admiration. "It seemed to hover about him as a separate Energy, a distinct Dæmon, being near or in, but never of him, having no relation to his character or bodily frame. His character was soft, weak, and yielding; his bodily system healthy, but flabby, and drowned in fat; while his genius was swift, winged, ethereal, almost universal in its range. I have often thought that he should be painted as a composite figure, such as we find in heraldry —a large luxuriant sloth, with an eagle perched upon his back. De Quincey calls him a Centaur; but a Centaur was an active, Coleridge a lazy, animal. And yet study and writing would have cost him very little trouble, if he had but once fairly bestirred himself. His conversation overflowed with poetry. He had only to open his eyes to see the deepest mysteries and most important truths, which were all flutter-

ing like winged angels about him, and he would not take the trouble; he only now and then lifted a lid, and saw 'atoms of the rainbow,' bright centreless gleams of the richest colouring, but of no continuity, hovering before him. He accepted every invitation to loiter on his way, and to enjoy his physical sensations. I said to him one day, in a fit of indignation, 'Why, Coleridge, if you had been Moses, called to go up to the Mount and meet with the Legislator of the Universe, you would, had you found a nest of honey in a cleft of the rock, have sat down and tasted, and forgot the summons.' With the soul almost of a Shakspere, he was in indolence and luxuriousness only a few degrees above a Sheridan. And yet the strangest thing about him was, that whenever he recalled himself from his bewildered dreams, or roused himself above his habitual laziness, his remarks on men and things were as acute as if he had been watching every object with lynx-eyed perspicacity. He spent all his days and nights 'sitting by the shores of old Romance,' and yet seemed to know law, and politics, and gossip, and ladies' dresses, and all the topics of the day, better than any man; and his observations were often tinctured with as much bitterness as if he had been an actor, and an unsuccessful actor too, in all of them. You saw that the *Brownie** had been with you, by the kicked-down pails and other mischief made, more than by the work in the kitchen. He seemed to see and feel too while he slept, like a clairvoyant." "Didn't he steal from other authors?" I asked. "Yes," he said, "De Quincey makes him out a thief; but I think he stole in his sleep, too. I don't believe he was aware that he had been pilfering, till he was challenged with it; and then he got first confused, and then angry, and then hated you bitterly all his life long for charging him with theft. His vein of conversation was often delightful. You forgot the very presence of the speaker, and your soul turned at least *its* eyes away from the man, while listening to the sound of his voice, like that of some sad but far-sighted and

* "Brownie;" the famous Scotch household fairy.

poetic Genie of the 'Arabian Nights,' imprisoned within him. His voice was a very peculiar one; it was soft, not strong; sweet, and yet with a strange huskiness, amounting almost to harshness, in its notes, like the voice of a river when half crusted over with ice. He had a burr, too, and a lisp, which completed the contradictory elements which mingled in it. Yet, on the whole, it produced a melodious effect, and told you, before you knew who he was, that you were in company with a poet." I asked him what he thought were the effects of opium on him mentally; morally, of course, and physically, it had been very pernicious. "Why, I don't think with some that it produced his peculiar genius—that had existed in him from his boyhood; besides, I don't believe that opium, or tobacco, or whisky, can create intellect: an opiated sumph remains a sumph, and an opiated seraph was a seraph before. Its principal effect on Coleridge was to bring up his weaknesses abreast of his strength, to nourish that dreamy self-indulgence and that habit of endless talk which he had even when a child. It made him miserable, too; and that misery produced a sort of lazy bitterness, an indolent spite, which vented itself in a sullen, sleepy venom against all his successful contemporaries. He could not even hate or abuse with energy, but was like a man in a dream, maundering out his half-conscious animosities and chagrins." I asked him what he thought of his works. "Towers of Babel every one of them, promising to scale the clouds, and yet all stopped through the indolence or caprice of the builder, and stopped, too, at the oddest and sometimes ugliest angles. He should at least have licked his abortions. But what glorious fragments he has sometimes produced! The 'Rime of the Anciente Marinere' and 'Christabel' are the purest creations since the 'Tempest' or the 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' They talk of Goethe; but what is there amid all the laboured extravagancies, polished pollutions, and sham catholicities of his thousand and one works to compare with such things as these?" "You don't admire Goethe, then?" "I admire his

extent, just as I have often wondered at the breadth of the bottom of a hill, that had little height and less amenity of aspect to recommend it. A hill! The cold-blooded coxcomb, he is not a hill, unless you call him a huge dung-*hill*, covered with snow and bathed in January moonlight. I admire also the impudence and fanaticism of his indiscriminate admirers, who prefer 'Wilhelm Meister' to Scott's novels, and 'Faust' to 'Hamlet.'" "But is not 'Faust' really thought a wonderful production?" "Yes; and so far justly. Its breadth I acknowledge to be astonishing, especially considering its small compass; and it has also some noble poetry. It is a picture of human life, given on a piece of canvas of the size of a crown-piece; and very little that is evil, at any rate, is omitted. Fantastic as the design is, all is there. The queer contradictions of human nature; the farce which borders or breaks out amidst the tragedy; the sinkings and soarings of man—in the morning mating with angels in studious contemplation, and spending the night, as he says,

'On some harlot's heaving breast;'

the flights of high thoughts, like eagles; of soft emotions, like doves; and of dark passions and darker doubts, like ravens which cross our sky and perch on our souls continually; the ingrained selfishness of man's nature, working in his love, in his hate, in his pleasure, and in his devotion—mining in his hell, and colouring the tints of his heaven; the restlessness and dissatisfaction attending all the movements of our speculative understanding; the dark, bitter, burning drop that lies at the bottom of every cup of pleasure,—are all faithfully given. 'Tis just a 'Devil's Dream' of man, done into German by Johann Von Baron Goethe, and could only have been so well done by a scoundrel, who knew by hearsay, observation, and experience, all the evil that was in man, and to whom, for the nonce, 'all power' was given—by some dæmon—I suppose, to represent it, but who knew very little of the self-devotion, the disinterestedness, and the kindliness,

honesty, simplicity, and piety which are in many of the race. Scott has given the best reply to 'Faust,' by painting Jeanie Deans. Goethe could no more have created or understood such a character, than he could have struck out angel-wings, and flown to the summit of the Brockan. Margaret is nothing to her. Mephistopheles is a little unclean sneering imp, who seeks, by applying a microscope to gold, to turn it into mud, and, by applying a microscope to mud, to turn it into gold, 'Faust,' while it preserves its author's fame, damns his character. Besides, it is really his only great work. His style is undoubtedly clear, clean, and sharp; but so may be a razor, as well as a scimitar. I am always amused at Tom Carlyle's adoration of Goethe. It is characterized, I think, by his usual contradiction and paradox. I am told that a Negress is now the favourite mistress with the Parisian scamps; it is something of a similar spirit which actuates Carlyle's love of Goethe and of Rousseau. Tired of our common healthy standards—our Homers, Miltons, and so on—he has taken up, for intellectual dalliance, with books so diverse from his own original nature and taste as, 'Wilhelm Meister' and 'The New Heloise;' and he drives out his black but comely darlings in that rushing chariot of his—to *my* great amusement, at all events."

I asked him what he thought of Schiller. "Ah! talk of Schiller, and, as Johnson said of 'Cecilia,' you may talk on. He was a man. His ideal of the highest style of man was, I think, wrong—merely that of an intellectual artist; and wrong, too, was his religious creed; but he wrought both of them out with almost superhuman determination. You like to see a Cyclops hammering away with all his might, although it be at armour for Pluto. Schiller had something better than genius—he had simplicity of character and true heart. His great error was, he did not think ill enough of man—the very opposite of Goethe, who thought much of himself, but little of man, and less of God." "Were not both Pantheists?" "I don't think so. Schiller

probably was a Pantheist, but Goethe was rather a Pandevilist. Schiller winked hard at the evils in the world, and tried to believe they were divine; Goethe looked at, handled, gloated over, and gloried in them. Schiller tried to see the divine that he thought was in them; Goethe thought them devilish, and liked them all the better because they were. It is ludicrous to see a genuine Pantheist at his work, taking up a round mass of mud, and trying to make it out to be a minor Milky Way; throwing toads and toadstools, serpents' tongues and spiders' webs, into a crucible to extract good and beauty out of them; encoring the law of nature which kills a child in its mother's arms by lightning, or sends a thousand shrieking wretches out of their warm berths into the bottom of the ocean; 'finding sermons in stones, and good in everything;' ludicrous, but somewhat allied to benevolence withal, and better than the theory that sees malice prepense in the intention of all these evil things. I think, on the whole, that the Christian scheme, with all its difficulties, rids us of the more formidable and hopeless difficulties connected with the German theories, and gives a certain *explanation* of the monstrous mischiefs we see around us, as well as prophesies their end, and, above all, begins already successfully to remove or abate some of them." He then launched out into a pictured panegyric of Jesus Christ, to which I can do but imperfect justice. "Think of his benignity—a benignity that has kept the heart of the world warm ever since! What a divine breath of love came out of his lips and his life! Then what but immediate inspiration could have given a Jewish carpenter such thoughts and language—thoughts deeper and language more melodious than anything in Plato? The Sermon on the Mount stands alone in the world. It is the utterance of an inspired child. You often hear children saying the divinest things in a scattered and inconsequential way; but here is a long stream of inspirations, so deep, so unconscious, so simple, and so unspeakably sublime! Think, too, of his boldness! This has been objected to Him by

fribbles, but seems to me one of his grandest attributes. That humble, babe-like man, assailing all the right reverends and right honourables of his day! The rebuke of a child is felt to be the severest of all; and here was forked lightning coming out of the child Jesus' mouth. He was no literary man—no scholar; He could barely read and write; and yet what literature He has produced! It dropped from Him like light from a star. He seemed to know little directly about philosophies or sciences, and not to need to know anything of them. What comparison between the babblements of the schools and those grand generalizations and melting simplicities of Christ! It was a kind of sweet, subtle, divine *essence,* which distilled from his mouth. And then how free of *cant!* How void of formality, of starched precision, of austerity, of vanity, of deceit, and of any desire after personal aggrandizement! 'I may not become an earthly king,' was the purport of his language, 'because I am God.' And yet the calm dignity, the quiet, absolute certainty with which He asserted his claims to Deity, were enough to prove that these claims were true. And then that blessed story about the children! I can hardly speak of it without tears. He found no equals to Himself in kings or in sages. Children were his fittest companions, his only co-mates, in the world. They alone reminded Him of those beings He had left in his native region. I could not, in short, conceive that were the good God to have incarnated Himself in a man, that He could have found an incarnation so like Himself—so full, so dignified, so sublime in its simplicity—as in Jesus Christ. And since, how all the good, the true, and the child-like among men have been attracted to Him! He, and the story of his cross, seem dropped down like a great magnet into a ruined world, to draw to itself and redeem all who will believe on Him." As he went on in this way about Christ, although in much grander language than I can recount, with his deep, quivering voice, softening eye, and shaggy mane, I thought of one of the lions in Daniel's den, kissing the feet of the beautiful prophet.

I had been reading recently "Peter's Letters," where Lockhart says that Wilson might have been the greatest preacher of the age; and I was confirmed in that opinion to-night.

I had several pleasant walks and interviews afterwards. I asked him once, why he had ceased to publish poetry? He answered: "Your word is the proper one—ceased to *publish* —for I write it still occasionally. The public did not encourage me to publish it: they wanted strong stimulants, and they only got a little wild mountain-honey. The fact is, when writing poetry, I felt as some ministers feel in the pulpit,—a sense of sacredness, which quieted, if it did not quell, inspiration." "I suppose," I said, "you felt as I could conceive an eagle to feel on the morning of the day of the Second Advent; unable or afraid to soar amid the thunder-laden and portentous air." "Ah! that is too complimentary, both to me and to my themes. But I *had* a feeling of awe when writing 'The City of the Plague,' 'Unimore,' and, more strongly still, when inditing a long MS. poem on the Covenanters, which, I believe, has run on to five thousand lines, but which will not see the light till *I* cease to see it." "Indeed!" I said; "why not sooner?" "The fact is," he said, "the feeling that pervades Scotland,—its every hill and strath, Highlands as well as Lowlands,—about that stalwart and noble race, is itself a perpetual poem, humming through the Scottish land and the Scottish heart; and I should be afraid lest my effort should fall short of the national feeling. I once thought of writing a prose work, too, either in shape of a tale or of an history, on these brave men. Scott has not done them full justice in 'Old Mortality,' otherwise the masterpiece of his genius. In Burley, splendid as the portrait is, he has libelled, not only the Covenanters, but human nature. It is the one malignant portrait in all his works. Benignity, indeed, is their pervading spirit. He does not love all things or beings; he is too much of a sturdy Scotchman and 'good hater;' far less does he pretend to love them, like a painter wreathing his cheek into sham smiles upon all his 'Models:'

he is too honest, good, and manly for that; but he has a gruff general liking for all and sundry, mingled with a deep enthusiasm for many. Scott is, if not the greatest, certainly the healthiest and sincerest writer in the world. I do not, of course, compare him with Shakspere, in splendour, originality, and subtlety of genius; but in simple, broad truth, and manly, direct vigour, he was, I sometimes fancy, even superior." I suggested that, although what he said about Scott's generosity of spirit was doubtless true, it was singular how his best characters were soured, disappointed, and disrespectable beings,—gipsies, villains, smugglers, caterans—such as Rob Roy, Brian de Bois Guilbert, Varney, the Bohemian in "Quentin Durward," and Henbane Dwining in the "Fair Maid of Perth." "Aye," he said, "he had, like Shakspere, a dark sore, deep sunk in his nature, and which he relieved by creating such queer, ambiguous, and somewhat savage people. But he mingled even them with kindly elements. His very devils were only *brown*—not black. To show the good that is in evil characters is, I think, rather a more amiable task than to show the evil that is in good, or to make the good incredibly perfect. Every castle of old had its dungeon; and, I suspect, every lofty mind has its deep misanthropic pit, with plenty of sullen, waveless water, and many reptiles, living or dead, swimming or rotting within. Scott's undoubtedly had; and he had his reasons for it, too." I asked if he had taken a similar place with Burns in the affections and admiration of the Scottish people. He said: "Hardly; he had spread himself too much abroad, and had not concentrated his force on 'dear auld Scotland' so much as Burns, whose sole mission seemed to be to shed the glory of a summer gloaming over his beloved country, and who, so far as that mission went, was the sincerest and the most successful poet that ever lived. No lines in any language could, in intense nationality, vie with the 'Vision,' or the little verse in his other poem" (and here, as Wilson repeated it, I saw tears in his eyes)—

"'The rough bur-thistle spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside
And spared the symbol dear'—

Since the inspired lines—

"'By Babel's streams we sate and wept
When Sion we sate on,
In midst thereof we hang'd our harps
The willow-trees upon.'

But neither Burns nor Scott have fully entered into the religious enthusiasm of Scotland; that grand dim shadow of the Jewish hills which lies—and long may it lie!—on the Scottish soul. My friend James Grahame, of 'The Sabbath,' understood this far better than either, if he had had equal power to express it. Yet Grahame was a real genius in his way, too; and his writings contain some cabinet-pictures of scenery, and some etchings of little nooks and crannies into which the Beautiful had crept, and into which he seemed to have crept after it on his hands and knees, equal to anything. Had he been a worse man, or even less pious, he would have got more credit for genius than he did. I used to call him, long before he became a curate, 'The Great Unordained.' Although a lawyer, he seemed to walk through the streets like a Bishop out of a benefice. He was one of Nature's clergymen; so tall, solemn, swarthy, and yet as mild in look as he was majestic. He used in secret to pray, and make extempore hymns aloud; and it was a great treat, and sometimes a blessing to his friends, to listen to that pure, pious, and gifted soul, conversing through an organ voice with God. When he paused, you almost expected to hear a *reply from above.*"

I asked if it was true that *he* had once uttered an extempore prayer, when wandering among the mountains? He started, and asked how I had heard it. I mentioned the name of a student who had told me. "Ah!" he rejoined, "Hogg must have been blabbing; for I never mentioned it, except to the Shepherd. There is more truth in it, however,

than in most of the stories told about me. I had risen one morning early, to walk over from St. Mary's Loch to Moffat. There was, at first, a thick mist which shrouded the hills, and through which I slowly wound my way; but, upon rounding a point, I saw such a spectacle! Before me were suddenly revealed a hundred hill-tops, as if all newly springing up from a deep ocean of mist, to salute the sun, who was flashing on them from the high east, as if that moment created, or that moment constituted king of day. I seemed to see God dawning on a new world just struggling into existence, and, as its mountain-tops unbared themselves to worship, I could not help doing so too. I could not cry out with Cromwell: 'Arise, O God, and let thine enemies be scattered!' for God seemed risen on his creatures, not his foes; but I bared my temples, and burst out into a passion of prayer to that great Being, whose emblem and smile I felt that sun to be. It was a *speaking* trance, which lasted I know not how long, but certainly as long as the superb spectacle. Hogg probably exaggerated the particulars of the incident, but he could not exaggerate the transport of the feeling. By the way," he went on, "I know a man, now rather eminent in the republic of letters, who when a boy, or rather youth, taking the words 'Pray without ceasing' in their literal acceptation, spent his every waking hour in uttered, muttered, or silent prayer; praying aloud several hours a day, muttering prayers at other times, and, even when occupied in his ordinary avocations, silently. but consciously engaging in prayer. It lasted for a year or two." I said that was as bad as poor Kit Smart, when mad, asking his friends to kneel down and pray with him in the street. "No," he said; "this man was and is quite sane; his mistake only was in not knowing that, as Madame de Stael says, 'Death is just a more ardent prayer of the mind;' so life, when well-spent, (and part of it should be spent in devotion,) is itself one long prayer." He then alluded to Jean Paul Richter's sublime description of the mountains looking up in prayer to God,

and the dead praying with folded hands in their coffins, and the waves of ocean dashing for ever in prayer at the foot of Jehovah's throne; and added: "The German idea of prayer is that of aspiration; so that thus the universe is one ever-swelling succession of waves of prayer, heaving higher and higher toward the invisible Being who sits above; the inanimate creation forming one wave, vegetable life a second, animal life a third, the spiritual life a fourth,—all pursuing One the hem of whose garment may always be touched, but who can never be overtaken or surpassed. But this is rather too mystical a notion for me."

I asked him if he thought Richter as great a man as was generally supposed. He said "he liked him, next to Schiller, better than any of the Germans. His mind was a weird witch-pot; but it was cooled, not with 'a baboon's blood,' but with the blood of a canny Scot. There were the rough vigour, clear insight, and strong common-sense of a Scotchman, mixed with the phantasmata and extravagances of old Faderland." "One thing he never could endure in these German geniuses,—their sitting at the piano, and improvising there! It was becoming rather the fashion in this country, but seemed to him a monkey-trick. He could bear with it in a Theodore Hook, or a Hoffman, for neither of these was a man, each only a wondrous mannikin; bear it almost even in Leigh Hunt, who was a shade higher in the scale; but think of it in a really great genius, or a hero! Think of Pascal, or Dr. Johnson, or Richard Bentley, or Coleridge, or Cœur de Lion, or Wellington, at a piano!" "Aye," I added, "or Christopher North." "Besides," said he, "it *poisons* my ideal of the piano, which I always associate with a beautiful maiden, or elegant widow like Mrs. Gentle,* with dark hair or long fair tresses, beautifying and beautified by the ivory keys, the polished wood, and the splendid harmonies. But how provoking to see, instead, a great male-monster, with bushy

* 'Mrs. Gentle;' see 'Noctes.' She is supposed to have been an *alias* of Wilson's own amiable wife.

moustaches and looks of upcast affected idiocy, officiating there,—I cannot, for my part, endure it. Of course much depends upon national taste; but I almost shudder when I read of brave honest Jean Paul exciting himself to write by sitting down at a piano, and tingling away for some mortal hours till the steam was up. I hate these transferences and transpositions between male and female work; and hence I cannot bear a tailor, who has borrowed a woman's needle; a weaver, who has run away bodily with her loom; and a musical coxcomb, who has pilfered her piano. I think that, on the other hand, while the organ is too grand an instrument for woman, the harp is an amiable *double entendre* between the sexes. I love to see a beautiful spirit-like girl singing to her harp; and I should like scarcely less to have seen a spirit-like man like Shelley, or Byron himself, playing on a harp, which, in his hands, would assume a nobler name—

> 'Bending as he swept the chords
> Of his sweet and awful *lyre*.'"

He said he "feared the age of great poets and great poems was gone. We have, at present, floods of good verse, but very little that can be called great or original. The proof of great original genius in poetry perhaps lies in its producing a sense of unrest, almost of dissatisfaction. You feel and see, but are not always pleased with such poetry at first. It is *good*, you believe; nay, you suspect it to be *great*; but it seems too new and too strange for enjoyment. I believe nectar would not be relished by a mortal at the first draught so well as mead or ale. Some of the most exquisite fruits of the tropics are not liked at the first taste. Ordinary, nay good poetry, you read once, relish, and never think of nor desire to read again: it makes little impression, and leaves no stings. Far otherwise with the *highest* poetry. It must *at once* interest, nay fascinate; and yet it may, at the same time, disgust or appal. It must grow upon you, or you must grow to it; and, even though you do not love it, you feel a strong

inclination to recur to it again. You say: 'I am determined to like, as much as I admire, this poetry.' I remember my own experience attesting these views in some remarkable instances. When I read the 'Rime of the Ancient Marinere,' as first published in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads, I saw and felt it to be something extraordinary; but I did not like it. Yet it fascinated me. I read it again and again, and became, at last, fully aware of its wondrous power. It was much the same when Aird sent me in his 'Devil's Dream on Mount Acksbeck.' I read it with a kind of half-shudder. 'Well, that is very grand, very terrific, and certainly very new; but—but—but'—I said to myself. I read it to a party of friends where James Hogg was. He grunted out: 'Wilson, that's joost sublime nonsense.' 'It may be so, James; but neither you nor I could have written it. I like it better the oftener I read it, and, at all events, it shall appear in *Blackwood*.' I now, in common with most critics, regard it as a masterpiece of imagination. The public has not yet, however, seen Aird fully—and that I account for on this theory—nor has it seen Carlyle either; but it will one day see both: admire and tremble at the terrible Tom of Annandale, and admire and love the gentle and gifted Tom of the Eildon hills."

"You know another Tom better, I think, than either, my old Rector." "Campbell! yes! An enemy might, at one time, have almost quoted about us the words—

'Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither'—

You know the rest. A fine gifted fellow was, is, and ever shall be, Tom Campbell. I remember him coming to the Logic Class first, a little black-eyed boy—what they call in the west a '*smalley* boy'—with a pale cheek, just touched with a reluctant yet lingering tinge of red like a moss-rose, and an eye that sparkled with all the young life of genius. He was more remarkable then for his wit than even his scholarship or his love of poetry. A most provoking little imp he was! He

ran about, firing off paper pellets or *viva voce* epigrams against the bigger lads, and often nearly got himself thrashed for his pains. I was stronger and sturdier, and stood by him in such scrapes, as well as in all snow-ball fights and foot-ball matches. We went once to the Highlands, and shut ourselves up in Tarbat Inn, for the hopeful purpose of writing an epic poem. We compared ourselves to Beaumont and Fletcher; nay;—for our conceit was unbounded,—to Homer and Virgil, meeting in the shades, and clubbing their sublime genius. By the way, most of such joint-stock literary schemes are absurd. They have, indeed, been sometimes entered on by real poets, but they have not very often been successful, nor produced much permanent poetry. There is generally some fatal disparity in the firm, and, even when the parties are about equal, the one perhaps writes his best, and the other his worst; one cannot perform his task well from a sense of the ludicrous, and, in another, emulation perhaps darkens into envy. You remember the countryman who, taking up 'Lara and Jacqueline,' by Byron and Rogers, cried out: 'Ah! summat like Sternhold and Hopkins, I suppose.' Two fellows crossing poetical pipes, and puffing in each other's faces their 'inspissated' inspirations, as Johnson would call them, is a ridiculous conception. Nevertheless, to it Campbell and I set; and began a poem called the 'Tarquiniad,' the subject being, of course, the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome. Our agreement was to write book about—and the number was to be twenty-four books, the real heroic number; he to write the first and I the second, and so on. I went into a room looking up along the wild mountain-pass coming over from Loch-Long, and, inspired by the scene, I suppose, I got on with vehement haste, till I had finished some thousand or two lines, when I thought I might step across and see how my coadjutor was getting on. There he sat, looking out on the broad Loch-Lomond, the very picture of beautiful despair, like an Apollo who had lost his arrows, holding a quill in his hand, but utterly unable to indite a single line. He had stuck

in the middle of the invocation to the Muse. He asked me about my progress, and I showed him, with great exultation, my big though blurred MS. He had his revenge. He quietly took it out of my hand, and began to read it in mock heroic tones so exquisitely absurd, so atrociously and inimitably ridiculous, that, although like to cry for vexation, I was at last compelled to break out into a loud peal of laughter, in which he joined; and the result was, that the two merry, although mortified poets, ordered dinner, and washed down their chagrin in Glenlivat. Next morning we left the place; and the 'Tarquiniad' is still a Torso. I had, long afterwards, a somewhat similar scene with the Ettrick Shepherd, which he has recorded, I believe, with a few of his usual additions and exaggerations. I remember once standing on the quay at Greenock, when a small boat hove in sight from the Gareloch. I saw seated at the stern a strange, dark, savage-looking man, his face black all over with beard, his eye glaring, and his dress somewhat disordered, a Highland plaid slung over his shoulders, and a Highland bonnet on his head. I looked more narrowly, and found it was Campbell, although so changed that I had difficulty in recognising him. He had been away for a month on a ramble among the mountains, and, having saluted, and adjourned to my hotel, he gave me a number of strange particulars about his tour. He said it had been a wild poem. He had witnessed a thunderstorm in Glencoe," ("I heard him describe that," I interposed,) "which had, although he denied it, considerably frightened the little man. He had spent a night in a Highland still, and described the scene with great vividness: the surprise and rage with which the smugglers clustered round him as he entered, supposing him to be an exciseman; the glee of their disappointment when he told them he was just a Glasgow student on the *daunder;* the mysteries of the Worm, which they explained to him, with some practical applications thereof, which threatened to disturb his equilibrium; his falling asleep and awakening about midnight, and the scene he saw of the wild

faces of the smugglers, flashing in the last embers of the dying fire, and the stars shining with a ghastly light through the smoky rafters,—he thought, for a few minutes, that he was in another, and not a better world. He soon, however, came to his recollection, and, resuming the spree, he sang Greek in exchange for Gaelic songs, heard wild tales, and cracked queer jests, till morning broke on the revel, and he went on his way. He had contrived, too, to fall in love with an innkeeper's daughter, whom he described as a perfect beauty, but whose confounded Highland pride, although her only family escutcheon was 'Cakes and Whisky,' he found too much for him. He had fallen short of cash, too, in his travels, and had at one time, at Oban, announced a series of readings from Shakspere, by an Oxford student, through which he realized, by a collection at the door, the sum of seven pence halfpenny and three nails, contributed by those who had nothing better to give; had announced, at another place, a sermon by a Welsh Methodist minister, with somewhat more success, only, 'Confound it,' said Campbell, 'they smelt my accent, and said: "That's a clever lad; but surely he was born in Glasco';"' and at Inverary was compelled to sing in the streets a few ballads, including one or two of Anacreon's Odes, which passed, as with the smugglers, for Erse, and were very popular. 'And so, John,' he concluded, 'I may say, like Goldsmith, that since I have struggled so hard to get back to you, I do expect to be received with much thankfulness.' And this I need not say I did. We spent the night together; and, through means of my supplies, he got his beard shaved, his dress rearranged, and we went merrily to Glasgow. Many a time since I have recalled to his memory that meeting and trip, and he has said with a sigh: 'It was the queerest and most delightful month I ever spent in my life. And yet how relieved I felt when I saw your big yellow head on the quay at Greenock!' Poor Campbell! he is a noble fellow; although feeble in many things, and one who never has been nor shall be a happy man. He has wrought hard enough, but never

taken kindly somehow to work, and all his best poems have come on him like jets of flame in momentary inspiration, and a great whole he has never even attempted to construct. He has, however, wondrous genius; and as a lyrist yields only, in Scotland, or in England, Ireland, and the modern world, to Burns and to Schiller. His is true 'Greek fire;' so chaste and pure, as well as keen and ardent. In his better Odes, and in portions of 'Gertrude of Wyoming,' I could no more think, or dare, to alter one of their words, than I durst dream of dashing out a star from the Pleiades, or of cutting away his belt from Orion. Nor was this perfection the effect of polish merely, but of the patrician nature of his genius. How a boy from the High Street of Glasgow could ever, and so early, display a taste as refined as that of Athens in her best age, I can in no other way explain. His 'Pleasures of Hope,' full as it is of youthful falsetto and flourish, is full also of this innate aristocracy; its very bombast is regal. The mystical fudge of the imitators of Coleridge and Shelley has kept Campbell out of sight of late; but the 'star that bringeth home the bee,' will reappear again in her own meek western hermitage. What can be better, more graceful, more elegant, yet unpretending and simple in its beauty, than such love-stanzas as those to 'Caroline?' What cultured strength, again, like 'beechwood in the blast,' in his stanzas on a 'Scene in Bavaria!' What tremulous finish in his lines on 'Painting,' and his 'Field Flowers!' What chastened prophecy, what subdued inspiration, like the half-unfolded wing of an angel, in his 'Lines to Emigrants!' What light but unspeakably beautiful touches in 'Gertrude;' like the stealthy strokes of a superhuman artist, anxious to be unknown, yet unable to resist the temptation of leaving the beauty-marks of heaven on the canvas! And what Horatian daring in his 'Lines to Kemble!' Homeric daring in his 'Hohenlinden,' and 'Lochiel's Warning!' and Dante-like daring in his 'Last Man!' The critic must be a senseless fellow who classes Campbell with such an elegant moth as

Rogers, such a bright butterfly as Moore, or even with Beattie and Gray, whom he incomparably excels both in beauty and in power."

One night, parting from Wilson, he said, "You must come to-morrow to Ambrose's. The Noctes are now shorn of some of their beams; but Lockhart is at present in Edinburgh, and I have engaged to sup with him, Pat Robertson, De Quincey, and one or two good fellows, to-morrow night. It shall be an early supper—cloth laid and oysters ready at eight precisely. You must come." I, of course, declared my eagerness to comply with the flattering invitation, and at the appointed hour arrived in a large room, two stairs up, in that redoubted meeting-place of the wits. The *tout ensemble* of the group, as I entered, was imposing. They were all standing around the fire-place, and Wilson's grand and portly figure and flashing eye constituted the centre of the picture. He that night, like Will Waddle, who was

"Two single *gentlemen* rolled into one,"

seemed two single geniuses rolled into one; and his eye was flashing with a double portion of the fire of poetic inspiration. Near him, and cowering as it were under his wing, stood a little man, with two queer inscrutable eyes, a broad rather than lofty brow, a thin worn face, and a tremulous, nervous aspect. This was De Quincey, the English Opium-eater. Burying one or two of the company in his vast shadow, like that of Ben-Wyvis, the broadest of Scotch hills, stood a large personage, with a face like a baker's, round and flabby, with gross, greasy lips, which seemed ever smacking over an unseen repast, and a twinkle in the fat eye, as if it saw eternally some funny scene—one whom I had often seen in the Parliament House, and recognised to be Patrick Robertson, the prince of Scottish wags. Listening to his jokes were three or four persons of minor consequence apparently, among whom I observed one noticeable man, with a large pale brow, keen black eyes, fine, well-cut features, and sen-

suous lips, who was, I was told, a Mr. Brydges, a literary tailor of the town, a great connoisseur in paintings, and who had been christened "Director-General of the Fine Arts" by his witty associates. Standing close together were two individuals—a tall, erect young man, with dark-brown hair, large high head, a fine, simple, boyish face, and rich, expressive lips; and a shorter, thinner, more urbane-looking figure, with fair hair, a ruddy countenance, the glow distributed equally over the whole face, and a form slightly stooped;—two who were evidently intimate, and the appearance of both of whom displayed earnest simplicity and mild modesty of character. These were, I ascertained, Thomas Aird, author of "Religious Characteristics" and "The Devil's Dream," and Delta, the well-known delightful poet. And in a dark corner of the room, on one side of the fire-place, almost apart from the rest, and eyeing them all with a quizzical sternness, a quiet statuesque sneer, stood a person whose contour of countenance, dark-olive complexion, slightly Roman nose, black locks, and sarcastic expression, were manifestly those of the editor of the *Quarterly*, and the author of "Valerius," "Adam Blair," and "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk."

And so I was actually at a Noctes Ambrosianæ! I felt at first, however, rather terror than pleasure, and was glad, after Wilson had given me a kind word of introduction, to shrink into my mew, and take refuge among the *dii minorum gentium* who were composing the background of the picture, among whom there were two or three nearly as young as myself. The first thing I remember was some one inquiring what had become of the Shepherd, and remarking that a Noctes without the Shepherd was like a night in which the moon was omitted by "special desire." "James," roared out Wilson, "has taken offence at these harmless little meetings, and is standing up for his dignity." "The dignity of a boar," cried Lockhart; "what an idea!" "He thinks," said Robertson, "that you have made him in the 'Noctes,' as he would say himself, 'a soo playing on a trump.'" "Noble fellow,

though, James!" said Wilson; "but how 'Kilmany' ever could have oozed out of the brain of a man who made himself the fool of the Forum,* and wrote 'Hogg on Sheep,' I never could understand. Yet we hear of an oak sweltering honey, as well as bearing mast." "And where," said the same voice, "is Timothy Tickler? I'm sure I met him to-day in the Meadows, looking as erect as if he had been an old Caledonian dug out of a peat-moss, where he had fallen with feet foremost, and had got only partially fossilized." "Home's lines," said Wilson, "are more to the point—

> 'Bold and erect the Caledonian stood;
> Old was his mutton, and his claret good.
> "Let him drink port!" some envious demon cried;
> He drank the poison, and his spirit died.'

Perhaps old Syme† will be here yet. We can hardly do without him on such a field-night. He is a kind of compound of Lord Eldon and the Duke of Wellington. He speaks little, and that little very slowly. But his very yawns are oracular; his silence is significant; his whisper, like Siddons', brings down the house; his 'asides' are orations; and the turning up of his little finger is sublime."

Supper was now brought in, consisting of oysters *ad libitum*, and cold roast-beef; and afterwards a bowl of punch was compounded, and the current of the conversation, which had for a little been impeded, flowed on apace. "I hear," said Wilson, "that the Cockneys are setting up a small imitation Noctes, in a little ale-house at Hampstead Heath. What a strange affair it must be, where Hazlitt the Grim is in the chair, and Hunt the Giddy is croupier! What toasts!—'Confusion to Christopher!' 'May *Blackwood* bite the dust!' 'To the honour of Bow-bell!' What sentiments passed by acclamation!—'That the gentlemanhood of the nation is increasing, has been increasing, and ought to be diminished.'" ["You should,"

* "Forum;" a debating society in Edinburgh, where Hogg was the chief speaker and constant butt.

† "Syme;" see Ferrier's preface to the "Noctes."

interposed Lockhart, "have substituted for 'gentlemanhood of nation,' the 'circulation of *Blackwood.*'"] "What bitter things said about us! and what careful glances out at the windows, or under the table, lest there should be any spy to report the disgusting proceedings! And how cheering to their cockles when, some stray night, old Coleridge *daunders* in upon them, staff in hand, and begins to mystify them by conversing on the philosophy of Kant, they not knowing a word of German; or on the authorship of the 'Iliad,' they not knowing a word of Greek! And with what 'awful reverence prone,' and unwholesome flattery, they surround the throne of the 'bright-eyed marinere!' 'Beats Burke hollow!' grunts out the author of 'Liber Amoris.' 'Ow 'appy we hare,' says Hunt, 'to be privileged with the presence and the hinspiring heloquence of the greatest man of the hage.' Allan Cunningham alone ventures to say, after the orator is gone, 'Confounded nonsense! I never saw sae thick a mist on Criffel or Queensberry Hill a' my days, as that auld carle has been weaving. He's but a puir wee warlock compared to Sir Walter.' At this, Edward Irving starts up indignant, and vows that Coleridge is inspired—is the Moses, and he himself the Aaron, of these degenerate and God-forsaken days. Cunningham rejoins, that Irving had been better employed preparing his sermons, than sitting in a public-house, listening to the sublime 'havers o' a daft poet.' As the controversy waxes fast and furious, the scene becomes one of most admired disorder, and I shut it suddenly." "You don't," said Lockhart, "describe the Cockney Noctes half so well as you do those of Ambrose." "Why, there's nothing to be described," rejoined Wilson; "I can't make bricks without straw." "But you don't deny," said one, "that some of these men have genius, or at least high talents." "What say *you* to that, Lockhart?" cries Wilson. "There are certainly distinctions and varieties among that vermin," rejoined he; "but Hazlitt, Hunt, Reynolds, and Patmore are all vermin, notwithstanding. Lamb and Cun-

ningham are of a different order, but misery brings men acquainted with strange bedfellows; and what makes Irving and Coleridge herd even occasionally with such creatures, I cannot conjecture, except from that diseased love of praise which is common to both."

Up to this point, De Quincey had not opened his lips; but now I heard a thin but thrilling voice accosting Lockhart thus:—"Pardon me, Mr. Lockhart, but I think you do great injustice to these quondam associates of mine in the *London Magazine*, which, you may remember, was started by the late celebrated John Scott, in January 1820, although I did not commence to contribute to its pages till the month of September 1821; my first paper constituting the first part of my 'Confessions of an English Opium-eater,' which were afterwards collected into a separate volume, and published by the then eminent booksellers, Taylor and Hessey; although the *London Magazine*, I may remark, originally belonged to the respectable firm of Baldwin, Cradock and Joy—a trinity of names which has, in my ear, a certain majestic sound, and reminds me of some great rolling Latin termination. No names, I often think, can be compared to those of some of the Romans for grandeur of sound, like the long reverberated echoes of thunder, as I have heard them amidst the mountains of Cumberland and Wales, when I was wandering, a poor penniless boy, among their sublime recesses. Such are the names of Cæsar Augustus, Valerius Flaccus, Caius Julius Cæsar, Crispus Sallustius, Augustulus, and the words *Consul Romanus*. What pomp and magnificence of flowing sound! It is—" "I remember," interrupted Patrick Robertson, "a combination of sounds in plain English quite as superb." "Surely," said De Quincey, "if such there exist, it must be in some of the greatest of the prose authors of the early age of English literature—in the divine page of Milton, who approaches not unfrequently, particularly in his 'Treatise of Reformation,' and in his 'Areopagitica,' that grand swelling prose-lyric, to the more complicated harmonies of the Latin speech; or else

amidst the solemn intricacies, as of a maze in a sacred grove, of Hooker, whose 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' although neglected now by the frivolous, is a production which, for —" "They don't occur," cried Patrick, "in any such antique authors, but in one much better known—in Goldsmith, and are these: 'Miss Wilhelmina Carolina Amelia Skeggs.'" (A laugh, in which De Quincey good-naturedly joined, and proceeded.) "The anticlimax, my dear Sir, is perfect; and reminds me, through a common law of association, although one not noticed by Hartley, whose theory of Vibrations and Vibratuncles, although it seduced the unripe nonage of Coleridge, has always appeared to me a combination of some of the principal logical fallacies, such as the *petitio principii* and the *ignoratio elenchi*, as well as encumbered with special difficulties connected with our ignorance of the functions of the brain, and of the extent to which the nervo-mental energy collected in the head, as in a citadel, may be diffused, and as it were diluted, throughout the whole frame—your witty remark reminds me, I say, through its irrelevance, and, as it were, contradistinction to my grave criticism on Roman names, of the fact that I also have somewhat rambled; my original purpose having been to oppose Mr. Lockhart's rather sweeping charges of stupidity and absurdity brought against my former *collaborateurs*—Hazlitt, Cunningham, Lamb, and others scarcely inferior to them in talents or in genius. But ere I can enter on this argument, I must first settle the previous question, as to the difference between talent and genius; and I would comprise the necessary prolegomena for commencing the settlement of this question under the following five simple heads: first —" "Come now, Mr. De Quincey," roared out Robertson, "don't you remember what Dr. Johnson said, when asked whether Smart or Derrick were the greater poet? —'Sir, it is difficult to settle the question of precedence between a louse and a flea.' I don't want to learn whether Hazlitt or Hunt be the bigger insect; and, with the leave of the company, shall shift the subject, and call on Mr. Brydges

for a song." Mr. Brydges proceeded accordingly to sing, in a somewhat theatrical but effective style, the "Sweet Little Cherub that sits up aloft." During the *susurrus* of applause which follows all tolerable songs, a gentleman sitting beside me told me some curious anecdotes of the songster. One I remember. Mr. Brydges was attending a masquerade. A gentleman, who knew him through his disguise, came up and saluted him. "Mr. Brydges, on which of the bridges do you collect the pontage?" His sharp reply was, "On the *Pons Asinorum*. Fools and asses pass free. *You* may go on, Sir." I got into a corner with him, at an after-part of the evening, and enjoyed his conversation much. His remarks were exceedingly shrewd; his knowledge of books and of men extensive; and, although a thorough man of the world, he had retained an enthusiastic appreciation of literature. Unbounded was his admiration of Wilson, and singular were some of the anecdotes he told about him. He met him, he said, once in the street, about the dinner-hour, and asked him to accompany him home, and dine with him. He at first declined, because, he said, he had been long away from home; and, on inquiry, it turned out that he had, unknown to his wife or his bookseller, been spending some weeks in the Highlands. He had pitched his tent in a blacksmith's back-shop, and had employed his time in writing poetry. On one occasion he had taken a wager with the blacksmith that he would run up a great black hill, which lowered before the door, without stopping; and he gained the bet. He rushed up like a red deer, and shouted out the news of his triumph from the top. Wilson, in fine, went home with the Director-General, and they spent a most amusing evening together. Brydges, when talking of writings or pictures that pleased him, gave an audible smack with his lips, which was very edifying. He seemed one of the last specimens of that class to which James Ballantyne and Constable belonged, and literally swarmed with anecdotes of those halcyon days when Scott, Murray, and Jeffrey were in their glory.

I asked Wilson, on this occasion, his opinion of Pollok, and his very popular poem, "The Course of Time." He said aside to me, "Robert Pollok was a rare fellow in conversation, as well as in verse. Indeed, I never thought his poem, with all its merits, *like* the poet. It came out of a *part* of him, like Minerva from Jove's brain, but furnished little idea of the whole man, and none at all of that sharp common-sense, and that tart tinge of sarcasm, which gave a flavour to his talk. The best passages in 'The Course of Time' were the darkest—such as his pictures, ghastly and tasteless, but terribly new, and erroneously strong, of the Worm that dieth not, and Eternal Death—that most eloquent and poetical sketch of Byron—and the description of the signs preceding the Judgment, which Dante never surpassed. But one-half of the book is either trash, or exceedingly vulgar and coarse. His version of Christianity is very earnest, but he has bound the glorious volume in *sheep*. His work is a misnomer; it is not a 'Course'—not a regular and progressive poem, like a great river—but a series of broken and interrupted Highland linns. It has much fine, even noble poetry, but is not, as a whole, a poem. I am not sure if Pollok would ever have written great poems, although he had true poetic genius. He wanted not only constructive power, but the dramatic faculty, and also width of sympathies and elasticity of mind. He would never have become much more than a gloomy and powerful poetic declaimer, a kind of minor Young, with all his passion and nerve, but with less point and less richness of thought and fancy. It was my friend Aird there principally who prevailed on Blackwood to publish the 'Course of Time.' Blackwood and I saw its talent, but had doubts as to its success. Aird pointed out its elements of popularity with great acuteness, and said especially that, as the first poem of much merit written by a Scottish Dissenter, it was sure to rally all that body around it; and so it has proved. He reviewed it afterwards in *Blackwood*, in a style of measured panegyric which did not please the poet, who

was by this time deep in a nervous consumption, and sensitive to a most morbid degree. This accounted for his truculent language concerning Aird, who is one of the most amiable and modest of men, and who warmly appreciated Pollok; as well as for the ridiculous gasconades he used to utter about his intention to travel over all the countries which Milton had travelled through, and to return and write a poem, 'The Course of Eternity,' which was toe clipse the 'Paradise Lost.' The very idea of such a subject was preposterous, or, at least, the subject was beyond the powers of any mortal man. It is without the ranges even of the highest genius. The 'Course of Time' implies vicissitudes, as well as cumulative progress—more vicissitudes, and at the same time a stronger, steadier 'stress of tendency,' than Pollok has exhibited. But the 'Course of Eternity,' if we are taught to conceive of it aright, implies few changes; all is 'eternal and the same'—bliss unbounded, woe unutterable; and what poetry of much *human* interest can be extracted from monotony, however grand or however terrible that monotony be? *After* this world has come to an end, it is the wisdom—shall I say?—of the poet, in humble imitation of God himself, to shut the doors both of heaven and hell, and to leave to our own imaginations to conceive of what is going on within both."

Soon afterwards a good many songs were sung and speeches made. Patrick Robertson gave us his famous imitation of a Gaelic sermon, the thick "agusses" (ands) and "haneils" (noes) of which still ring in my ears, as well as the roars of laughter with which it was received. The very face of the man seemed to become inspired with the genius of fun; and its dull, dough-like expanse actually glittered through the tears and sweat-drops of mirth which bedewed it. After it was over, he called for a bumper to the health of Christopher North, and prefaced it by a speech, of which I recollect only the following very imperfect outline:—"Gentlemen, I move the health of a man whom we respect

and honour to the pitch of downright enthusiasm—a man of transcendent genius, and of a large and loving heart—the glory of Scotland—the pride of Edinburgh—the terror of quacks all over the world—a man who, to use figurative language, combines the playfulness of the kitten, the high-soaring plume of the eagle, the keen eye of the vulture, and the might and magnificence of the lion—the uncoverer of the 'Cottages' of Caledonia—the singer of its 'Streams'—the wild warbler of its 'Ornithology'—the poet, also, of its punch-bowls and potatoes (laughter), whose praise at this moment rises reeking from ten thousand toddy-tumblers, and hovers in the incense which ascends from a million porridge-pots—who has a power of uttering eloquent, magnificent, and sounding nonsense (laughter) only inferior to his power of inditing sense and perpetrating poetry—who might have been the greatest statesman in the world, had he ever studied Cocker—the greatest orator, had he ever learned a little elocution—the greatest preacher, had he ever managed to get ordination (a laugh)—the greatest traveller, had he ever been able to quit the attraction of his *natale solum*—the greatest author, had he ever, as was said of Sheridan, been persuaded to learn to read and write like other people—and who is, at all events, the brightest 'star' in our Noctes, or in any Noctes, I verily believe, being at present, or that ever have been, or shall be, celebrated throughout the wide universe. I beg leave, *sans* further phrase, to propose a nine times nine round of applause to the sole author of the 'Lights and Shadows,' the joint author of the 'Chaldee Manuscript' and 'Peter's Letters,' the poet of 'The Isle of Palms,' and the presiding genius of these amiable Ambrosian entertainments, Christopher North." *

The applause, of course, was tremendous; and up through

* There were frequent rencontres between these two celebrated wits. On one occasion Robertson began bantering Wilson on his increasing corpulence. Wilson's reply was, "Yes, Mr. R., I *am* fat, but not like many people, *disgusting*." It was felt as a homethrust.

its subsiding but still resounding wave, like Neptune from the deep, rose Wilson, with a calm grandeur of aspect, mingled with an air of suppressed fun, which I despair of adequately describing. He stood for five minutes, or nearly so, looking with eyes of fire, not on his audience, but on the air, up which seemed coming his future speech; and at last, in deep, low, but gradually strengthening and swelling tones, amid silence

"Deep as night,
Or summer's noontide air,"

he thus began:—

"Gentlemen:—I thank you from the depths of my soul for the applause I have received; for the praise that preceded it; and for the silence and attention with which you are now watching my poor lips. I value the very censure implied in Mr. Robertson's eloquent and warm-hearted speech, as attesting the sincerity of his panegyric. I have not, gentlemen, to quote Burke, been 'nursed and dandled' into an author, or a teacher of the young mind. I have had to fight my way inch by inch; and although Mr. Robertson may be right in his hint about my defective culture, (and I value the hint more that it comes from such a thoroughly learned and classical gentleman, who in person and in speech is the model of the Graces, as well as of the Gifts [a laugh], and whom I should not be surprised to see yet waddling up the steep sides of the Parnassian hill, like another 'Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson O,' [loud laughter], although, perhaps, like him, 'more fat than bard beseems,') yet I can seriously tell you, gentlemen, that it has been my care to cultivate daily, and for many a year, my knowledge of one subject, in which, I am proud to say, I have profited more than many of my fellows: I mean Scotland (loud cheers); and in this no man shall make my glorying void. It is not of myself I am to boast, but of that dear and magic land which has *compelled* me, by the witchery of its scenery and its manners, to know it so well. (Cheers.) I claim no higher character than that of a slave or a shadow; but I am Scotland's slave, and have followed

her, my venerable mother, like a shadow, into all her nooks and corners, and wherever

'Beauty pitches her tents before her.'

I love, indeed, that beautiful English land, and that magnanimous and stately English race; love its fine levels, rising so gradually as they run northwards into bold mountains, till, in the Lake Country, where stands my own sweet Elleray, the beauties of the south and the north meet and embrace each other, and remind me of a strong Scotchman, wedded to a fair and gentle daughter of Devonshire or Kent (applause) —love its sturdy and self-asserting sons, and its princely maidens, with their grace and gentle womanhood, their soul-like step and carriage, and their voices so deep yet delicate, so majestic and so mellifluous (great cheering); but I love also, and with greater intensity, from sympathy as well as from familiarity, from passion as much as from mere use and wont, the mountains, the men, and the maids of 'dear auld Scotland.' (Tremendous cheers.) I know something, gentlemen, of all three. I have stood on many, if not all, the lofty ridges of Caledonia's hills. I have seen the morning break from the brow of Benlomond; I have had my feet, as my friend Aird would say, 'shod with the thunder' of Bennevis (cheers); I have stood on the bare scalp of Ben-An, and heard the yell of the eagle, as he started from his morning slumber, on the cliffs of Cairngorm, and prepared to

'——prey on distant isles.'

I cannot say with Byron that

'I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow,
* * * * * *
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of Fear;'

but I have listened at midnight to the moan of the waves which break continually on the aisles of Staffa; and I have sat in Ossian's Cave in the valley of Glencoe, when, through the heaped drifts of snow, I could almost fancy the Mac Donalds flying up the glen from their pursuing enemies on

that dread February morn. I have slept in the forest of Ballochbowie, which leads its line of divine darkness, of pines and torrents, for ever alongst the base of Loch-na-Gar. I have bathed in the Linn of Dee, and in the beautiful reaches of the river which surmount the Fall of Foyers. I have heard the twilight voice of the great woods of Glenmore, and in the wide desolations of the moor of Rannoch have felt—

'Of the old *wastes* some reverential fear.'

I have sat on the brink of Loch-Aven, under the inky gloom of an autumn sky laden with thunder, and watched the grim shadow resting on the precipices, three thousand feet in height, which lower around that darkest and sublimest of all Scotland's lakes. I have seen grey Loch Skene, tossed with tempest, and shrieking with the thousand voices of its white waves to Heaven. And I have walked up alone the sides of that dreadful glen Coriskin, in Skye, where herbless, grassless rocks of granite sink sheer down on a savage and lonely loch, and where the Genius of the Mist sits on the beetling crags, even at summer tide, with his wet mantle shivering around his aërial limbs. (Great cheering.) I know too (and here again I say, if I seem to boast, it is not of myself, but of my country) much of the men and of the maidens of Caledonia. I have seen the Scottish character in all its phases, and found it in all of these to be true-hearted, patriotic, and noble, although tinged more with the grand shadows of the past than with the prophetic tints of the future. I have sat down at the peasant's fireside, and dipped my spoon with his in the pot containing his 'halesome' fare. (Cheers.) I have seen him with

'Lyart haffets waxing thin and bare;'

raising with reverence, as if it had been the Ark of God itself, the

'Big ha' Bible yance his father's pride,'

and have knelt beside him as he commended his family in prayer to their father's God. (Sensation.) I have gone out

with him the next morning to the peat-moss or the harvest-rig, and wrought by his side a summer's day, well rewarded for my toils by listening to words of simple wisdom and piety, which seemed the hoardings of a hundred years, and the echoes of those days when the covenanting crown still encircled the brow of Scotland, and when amidst the ancient hills the message of the everlasting Gospel was—

> 'By Cameron thunder'd, or by Renwick pour'd
> In gentle stream.'

(Loud cheers.) I have felt in these humble huts that truth is stranger far than fiction, and that facts are often more delightful, spirit-stirring, and sublime, than even the finest creations of poetic genius. I have, after working all day by the side of the 'good-man,' in the evening—what time

> 'The plantain tops were tinged wi' goud
> On yon burnside'—

courted the 'good-man's' lovely daughters (great laughter and cheers); have played at Barley-brax among the tall white stacks glimmering in the harvest-moon; and can fervently declare that simpler, purer, and more leal-hearted maidens I have never met on earth. (Cheers.) I have mingled with the revels of the village fair, and attended the athletic games of my country, both where sweet St. Fillans stands on the brink of Loch Earn, and where Braemar, in its green loveliness, reposes in the shadow of Ben-y-Boord. I have leapt with Scotland's flying tailors* (laughter), drank with her smugglers, drawn oars with her fishers, dined with her ministers, ate braxy† with her shepherds, wandered with her gipsies, (hear, hear,) and conversed at such meetings as this, and often elsewhere, with the *élite* of her men of genius. (Cheers.)

* "Flying tailors;" alluding to a famous leaper in Ettrick, a tailor by trade, who was said to have discomfited Wilson at his favourite pastime of jumping. See the early *Blackwoods, passim.*

† "Braxy;" diseased mutton: a *favourite* dish with Scottish shepherds.

I knew full well her Grahames' and Findlays, now, alas! no more. I know her Campbells and her Jeffreys; and many a time and oft have I listened to her ballad-poetry from the lips of that greatest of her living sons—may God for ever bless him!—Sir Walter Scott. (Immense applause.) But I will not much further trespass on your time. In speaking so much of myself, I have been only expressing my regard for my country, as well as supplying a reason for what otherwise were your undue enthusiasm for me. Ere I sit down I beg a toast, and be sure it is a toast to a Scotchman—the first of all her men of genius—to that strong peasant who, by one blow of his forehammer-fist, broke down the conventionalities of ages—the frost-work barriers which had separated the rich from the poor; who showed that genius, like the wind of heaven, bloweth where it listeth; who passed to eminence, as my friend Lockhart says, 'at a single stride from that plough-tail' where, 'walking in glory and in joy,' he had watched the fields and skies, and rural manners of Caledonia, with the eye of a lover and a poet, and had sung of the Daisy, the Field-mouse, and the Skylark, in strains simple and natural as those gums which the trees and flowers themselves distil in the silent woods; whose poetry was just the produced affluence of his large heart; and whose woes were only the birth-pangs through which all immortal things and all heroes are brought forth. (Cheers.) I give you the memory of him whose praise is sung by Caledonia's streams, from where the rapid Spey cleaves with arrowy haste the pine-forests of Relugas, to where the southern Dee empties her woodland waters into the Solway Frith; by Caledonia's lakes, from Loch Sunart to Loch Doon; and by all the waving heather and wild-torrent voices of her mountains, from Ben-More in the far shire of Sutherland, to the round Criffel, watching the wedding of the poet's own dear Nith with the sea; the memory of a tried, tempted, erring, but true-hearted, honest, high-minded, immortal man—Robert Burns." (Deep sensation and silence.)

After the toast was drunk, and one of the company had sung "A man's a man for a' that," a lively conversation ensued, of which I remember little except a few anecdotes told by a country gentleman present about Burns, one or two of which I quote, having never seen them mentioned in any of the biographies of the poet. The village of Carnwath is on the direct road between Edinburgh and Ayr, and the poet had occasion to pass it several times on his way between the two places.* On his first journey to the metropolis, he had arranged to pass a night with a Mr. Archibald Prentice, farmer, Covington Mains, who was an ardent admirer of the poet, and became a subscriber for twenty copies of the second edition of his works. A great many of Mr. Prentice's friends in the vicinity were invited to meet Burns, and, as some uncertainty existed respecting the time of his arrival, it was arranged that a flag was to be hoisted on Covington Hill, being a spot visible for a considerable distance, as soon as he reached. On the hoisting of the signal, all the farmers of the neighbourhood might be seen flocking to Covington Mains, to pay homage to the king of Scotland's ploughmen and poets. They spent with him a joyous night, and the next

* Since writing this, I find that Robert Chambers *has* told the first of these anecdotes in his "Life of Burns," with this difference, that he says the flag, a white sheet attached to a pitchfork, was hoisted on the top of a *corn-stack*, to proclaim the advent of the poet. I have my doubts, however, if this visit took place on Burns' *first* journey to Edinburgh. He is generally said to have performed it on foot, and to have been so fatigued with the walk that he was indisposed for some days—an indisposition to which he alludes in his letters,—and which was more likely to have been produced by a long walk than by a ride, unless, indeed, the hospitality of the Mains had been excessive. It is not, besides, at all likely that the farmers would have gathered to meet him, unless they had been previously acquainted with his poems. But the circulation of the first edition had been very limited. The enthusiasm felt for the poet was probably produced by Mr. Prentice's twenty copies of the second edition—circulated by him amongst his neighbours;—and Burns had afterwards repeated occasion to pass that way.

morning, 'weel mounted' on a pony borrowed at Ayr, Burns wended his eastward way. He called, in passing, on John Stoddart, a neighbouring farmer, but did not alight. Stoddart remarked that they were in great confusion, as they had a bride in the house. "Weel, weel," replied Burns, laughing, "Heaven send the lassie good luck." Good luck, accordingly, followed the blessing of the bard. The lassie became the mother of a numerous family, who all did well in the world. One daughter settled in Moscow, became the milliner and dressmaker to the Empress of Russia, acquired a large fortune, and returned home to her native country.

Another anecdote affected me much In the spring after Burns died, Thomas Nimmo, a native of Carnwath, having received his discharge from the army in England, was travelling home with a comrade. Passing through Dumfries, they inquired the way to St. Michael's churchyard, to visit the poet's grave. Following a footpath through the wilderness of ornaments which deck Death in that famous burying-ground, they looked around for a stone to tell them where he slept. Not finding anything of the sort, they made up to a female in deep mourning, who was sitting on the ground a little farther on. Nimmo thus addressed her: "Mistress, we are strangers, and would feel obliged if you could show us the grave of Burns." Pointing to the narrow mound at her feet, and bursting into tears, she said: "That, soldiers, is his grave, and I am his widow." The poor fellows felt hurt at having intruded on her in such circumstances, apologized for their abruptness, tendered their simple but heartfelt condolence, and went on their way. It were, I thought, a good subject for a painter: Jean Armour at the grave of Burns, while yet no monument marked the spot.

After a few more toasts and songs, the Noctes broke up; and I never attended any more of its meetings, nor did I see Wilson in private again for several years. I remained for some months during summer in Edinburgh, and was introduced in the course of it to Jeffrey, who was kind enough

to ask me out to dine with him once at Craigcrook Castle. When I reached Craigcrook, and entered the waiting-room before dinner, I found assembled a small but interesting assembly, some of whom I recognised as having seen in the street and elsewhere, but others of whom were strangers. There was our gifted host, with his sharp, dark, half-smoked visage, every point of which seemed to be looking at you; while two bright, restless, glancing eyes were only the foci of the vision diffused over all. Near him were the smooth open brow and honest genial face of Henry Cockburn, whose rich Scottish brogue I had often heard arising, and had compared, not to a "steam of rich-distilled perfumes," but—shall I say?—to the odour of a new-gashed haggis,* pervading the chilly atmosphere of the Parliament-house, and found most refreshing to my country senses. There was also a person to whom at the first glance I felt a singular mixture of feelings; half aversion and half attraction. He sat in a corner of the room, and seemed sinking at times through the floor. There was a curious nervous twitching about his whole body and face. His hair was close-cropped, dark, slightly snowed over by time, like a pine-tree in February; his countenance pale and haggard; his eye restless and eager, as if trying to see every object more perfectly, like the eye of a man looking to a letter in cypher; and a certain strange sternness and fierceness of aspect, mingling with his awkwardness and apparent timidity, completed the confusion of elements about him. Guess my surprise and delight when I heard Jeffrey cry: "Mr. *Hazlitt*, what do you think of the view you saw to-day from the Calton Hill?" This, then, was the author of "My First Acquaintance with Poets," and "The Spirit of the Age." I remembered immediately of having heard somebody at the Noctes say that Hazlitt was expected to visit Jeffrey in the course of the summer. Among minor notabilities, I was struck with the appearance of a man about thirty years of age; with dark locks approaching to a curl; cheek tinged

* "Haggis;" a famous Scotch pudding. See Burns.

with a healthy red; a brow broad, prominent, but rather low, not unlike that which painters give to Burns; eyes which in a front view said nothing, but which, when seen from the side, were seen rolling in fire; and lips which appeared as if perpetually *champing some invisible bit;* the whole aspect of the face being that of infinite restlessness, strongly restrained by self-control. His eyes and lips when he spoke seemed taking parts and responding to each other in one wild tune. A jaw like that of a tiger formed the base of the head; and a form not tall, but commanding in its mediocrity, from an air of proud humility and half-stooping strength, finished off the whole. I heard his name with comparatively little emotion then as "Mr. Carter." I had, indeed, read some of his papers in Reviews with admiration, but had no conception, any more than the public, what a lurid potentate of mind this man was yet to become. And it is probably from the natural confusion often made between after and present impressions, if I now suppose that I even then compared his aspect to that of Satan, led off between Zephon and Ithuriel—a haughty prisoner, stooping to inevitable Destiny, but stooping at such an angle of intense defiance and contempt; every feature and movement saying: "Ye slaves of Jehovah, how I contemn, while I yield to you! Know ye not that I was a god once; am the prince of devils still; and may be a god again?"

Such were the principal members of the party. When comparing them before and after dinner with the men of the Noctes, I was struck with their having less of the *free and easy* and less of the *Scottish* in their manners and feelings. Of course, Hazlitt was an Englishman; but even the Scotch in the party, with the exception of Cockburn, had little that was distinctively national. A certain aristocratic air, too, hung like a chain around every one; a chain, indeed, worn more lightly as the evening wore on, and the "good wine did its good office," but which had a constraining effect at first. For a long time nothing remarkable was said; the ordinary

news were discussed, and a good deal of clever, but somewhat envious, literary gossip circulated. It was curious contemplating the different views taken by two different cliques of different men and measures. It was the tale of the golden and the silver sides of the shield over again.

The Lakers were introduced; and very little ceremony indeed was used with their names. Jeffrey remarked, that "these poets seemed to have found the bottom of their ponds, and were doing nothing now but stirring the mud. Wordsworth might have been a decent enough quarter-Milton, had he not vainly sought to be a whole one. He had power and genius; but the power was lamed, and the genius could produce no finished results. Some astronomers held that those little planets—Juno, Ceres, Vesta, and the rest—were worlds which Nature had tried to make, but had failed somehow. Wordsworth had been always building away at poetic worlds, and produced not even small planets, but fragmentary aërolites, hissing their little heat out, and becoming cold and dead. He was no poet, if poet meant maker; no artist, if art implied construction on intelligible principles; and no prophet, if the prophetic power included self-forgetfulness and abandonment; he was only a strange mixture, in improper proportions, of some of the elements of all three. He had tried to find a new path in poetry; and, seeking for it, had gone sometimes high amid mist, and sometimes low amid mosses and leeches; but always ended in tumbling back into the old paths, knocking down sometimes, by his *vis inertiæ*, those that were walking quietly therein. He was paradox personified. Southey was a man of immense versatility, acquirements, and industry, but his poetry was only mimicry on a stupendous scale. He seemed to be a mocking-bird with a million heads, to speak in the style of his own 'Kehama;' imitating Milton in 'Madoc,' the Arabian and Persian writers in 'Thalaba' and 'The Curse;' Shakspere in 'Wat Tyler,' and Wordsworth *passim*. He went to every new kind of poetry as if it were to be mastered mechanically, like a new language,

and paraded his triumph over each, like the wicked lady in the 'Arabian Nights,' who showed a ring for every lover. Coleridge had greater powers than any of the other two, and less affectation and conceit; but his life had been deplorably regardless of all the conditions and responsibilities of real existence. He had latterly run all to tongue; his conversation moved on like the Dutchman's cork leg; he fancied there would be a mystical muttering heard even under his gravestone! He met him once at Keswick; and certainly, to such talk he never listened. It was a flow of magnificent words, and of what *seemed* magnificent thoughts and images, poured out from two rich but fading lips, like half-withered rose-leaves, moving slowly but incessantly under a face as red as a coach-guard's, and two eyes that seemed ever as if awaking from the sleep of a century. His talk that morning was a bright September mist; very beautiful in itself, but very provoking; not allowing one spot of blue sky to appear, and drenching the very locks of the sun ere it permitted him to peep through." "What say you to all this, Hazlitt?" cried Cockburn. "Why," he said, "confound it, I hate the Lakers as men, like a good Christian as I am; but I admire their genius, and wonder how it ever came to keep company with such accommodating consciences and turncoat characters as theirs. They have all three sold their birthright: Wordsworth for a stamp-office salary and the smile of a lord; Southey for the laureate's butt of sack; and Coleridge for the paltry price of a phial of laudanum. I would spend my last penny in treating Miss N—— (have you seen her, gentlemen? By the stars a Venus de Medici!) to see them hung. 'Twere a curious sight! Wordsworth would go off singing one of his own lyrical ballads instead of a psalm; Southey would lay his hand on his heart and swear to his consistency with his last breath; and Coleridge, with the rope round his neck, would be haranguing the hangman upon Aristotle's Predicaments—his own forgotten. They are a base gang; but baser still are their imitators in this good city.

When I was up to-day on your Calton Hill, looking toward the peaks of Rob Roy's country, and trying to forgive the author of the tale of that name for 'The Beacon,'* I heard a snigger behind me; and, looking round—would you believe it, Sir?—I saw the scoundrels of *Blackwood* assembled, and deriding me behind my back. How they had tracked me, I cannot say; but there they were. I knew them by instinct—Lockhart, the black-visaged and black-hearted; Wilson, the big, bright-haired butcher; O'Doherty, the 'Irish blackguard;' Timothy Tickler, with his gaunt physiognomy and endless body." "Nonsense!" interrupted Jeffrey, knowing the weak points and strange suspicions of his guest; "some of these men are, *I know*, out of town; your eyes must have deceived you. *Revenons à nos moutons.* When saw you Miss N——?" This threw the irascible critic from one hobby upon another. It was a little after the publication of "Liber Amoris;" and away he ran, as I had heard he was in the habit of doing, into the particulars of that unhappy affair, which had partially unstrung his powerful mind.

This effected a change in the conversation, but it soon flowed again into the channel of literature. Jeffrey strongly advocated a return to the school of Dryden, Pope, and Johnson in *manner*, along with an infusion of more of the *spirit* of Shakspere and the elder Dramatists. Hazlitt contended that the Drydenic manner as well as matter, at least as it had degenerated in Pope, was un-English and unnatural; while that of Shakspere ought to be imitated by all poets, and had been, on the whole, well imitated by Wordsworth. "I think, on the other hand," said Jeffrey, "that Byron might have been, and is in some points, the model-poet of this age. He adds much of the passion and high-soaring fancy of the Elizabethan time to the manly clearness, terseness, and finish of Pope and his period. He says a strong thing strongly, a profound thing quickly and without con-

* "The Beacon;" a notorious Tory print, of a scurrilous character, patronized at first by Sir Walter Scott.

sciousness, a beautiful thing gracefully, and a common thing quietly. I, of course, refer to his first two cantos of 'Childe Harold,' his 'Corsair,' his 'Giaour,' and I may add, his 'Don Juan.' I except such swollen and turbid strains as his fourth canto of the 'Childe,' his 'Darkness,' and his 'Cain,' in which he was misled by his brief nympholeptic passion for the Lake-school — a passion reminding me of Titania's *tendresse* for Bottom—and by the influence of that ethereal maniac Shelley. In 'Don Juan' he was returning, I think, to his earlier and purer taste." "*Purer!*" ejaculated Hazlitt; "pretty purity! But all things may be pardoned, I suppose, in a lord. I beg leave, Mr. Jeffrey, to differ from you decidedly in your estimate of Byron. He was an incarnate passion, rather than a true poet. He had force of intellect, and terrible concentration of will, but not that sympathy—

'All wide and general as the casing air'—

that liquid flow of feeling—that openness to all the skyey influences, like an Æolian-harp, waiting for the advent of any angel-wind that may be blowing through the universe—that broad benignity of nature—which characterized Shakspere, and which, more or less, characterize all highest poets. He did not 'look abroad into universality;' he stayed at home, and it was a gloomy home. His library-room—I have seen it in Newstead Abbey—looked not to the sunny south, but to the north, towards 'dark Loch-na-Gar.' It was a long and narrow, not a wide and ample chamber; and seemed to me, as I gazed at it, amid the mists and closing twilight of a November day, to be an emblem of the noble poet's mind. Yet I grant him to have been, in a sense, a man of strong genius, but of no geniality, and no dramatic power. He was the most selfish of men—and Shakspere the least so. Byron has crossed our literature like a falling Lucifer, seeking to drag down along with him all within the sweep of his lurid arm. But this is a devil's purpose, not a poet's."

"What think you of Shelley?" asked Jeffrey. "I suspect

you agree with me *there*." "I thought him," said Hazlitt, "another Piercy Shafton, in 'The Monastery'—not devoid of generosity, genius, and enthusiasm, but thoroughly spoiled by a sort of sincere coxcombry and by absurd flightiness. His genius was rather a *wild* goose than a swan. Some of his poems are the most beautiful and exquisite *evasions* of meaning and common-sense I ever read. Even his best works are more or less tinged with disease. He might say, to alter Stephano's words, in 'The Tempest,' 'I am not Shelley, but a scrofula.' He has been compared to Spenser, and has a good deal of his music and ethereal luxury of description, but wants his breadth and body, his ease, and his massive strength. 'Prometheus Unbound' might have been written by a gnome of genius. It has no relation or connexion with the affairs or scenery of this world." I here struck in, and ventured to say a word in behalf of my favourite; for he was so then much more than now. "Is it not interesting, though, to meet with a being so different from men, though it were for nothing but its rarity—a being so strange and wild, so sincere and so misled—like a child from another planet, wandering bewildered upon earth?" "Why," says Hazlitt, "upon this principle the best thing that could have been done with Shelley was to have caught him, clapped him, as the Brobdignagian farmer did Gulliver, into a cage, and made a fortune by exhibiting this 'Wondrous creature, uncommonly like the human race; no owner; newly fallen, it is supposed, from the top of one of the highest mountains in Mercury.' Keats was a truer poet than Shelley. His vein was more thoroughly ideal, healthier, and flowed more sweetly upon him. Shelley could only paint lunar landscapes—all was glaring, volcanic, and abrupt. Keats shone in describing the lush fruitfulness, the vineyards, and the corn-fields of 'dear old earth;' and yet when he mounted to the ethereal, as in 'Hyperion,' he beat Shelley on his own ground, and rose to Miltonic or Æschylean altitudes. Shelley was a metaphysician, a scholar, a genius, if you will—everything but a

man. Keats was not permitted much to overpass boyhood; but there was the germ of a man and of a hero within him. In one thing only did the poetry of Shelley surpass that of Keats—in purity of language; but this was owing rather to his superior culture than to his superior powers."

I noticed Carter, during this discussion, becoming peculiarly fidgetty, and saw his lips in manifest labour to be delivered of something or other. At last he found an opportunity; and in a strange, wild, Annandale accent, commenced a harangue, of which I remember only some faintly-defined peaks, looming through an ocean of burning mist. I say "burning;" for the intense although subdued excitement of the man seemed to steep his every word in fire. He commenced by wondering at men of "average sanity" discussing, with any seriousness, the claims of such "clanjamfry* of Cockneydom" as Shelley and Keats, when there were so many other high themes and noble men challenging attention. "They reminded him of a man who should, after climbing a lofty mountain—whence, as from a pinnacle of the great temple of immensity, earth, and the blue deeps of air, and the everlasting brine of ocean were beheld—should turn away from the prospect, and spend that hour he had given him upon the Mount of Vision in measuring the proportions of a ptarmigan, or in admiring the colour of an Alpine hare. If they wanted to speak of poets and poetry, they should look eastward, and think of the genius of Germany. *There* alone, in this late, self-listening age of cant and conventionalism, did he see any remains of the real spirit of poetry. Goethe and Schiller were men, cultured, gifted, earnest, heroic; and their poetry was just the flower of their noble manhood. Some poets, such as Keats, carried in them a vein, as the bee carries a small, sweet bag of honey, not diffused over their whole being, and having little relation to their other faculties. All the poetry in Johnny Keats might lie snug and unsuspected in the hollow of one of Jean Paul's stupendous chapters. But why," he

* "Clanjamfry;" rubbish.

said, "preach about poetry or anything else to an age like this? The public had become a gigantic jackass—Literature a glittering lie; Science was groping aimlessly amidst the dry, dead clatter of the machinery by which it means the universe; Art wielding a feeble, watery pencil; History stumbling over dry bones, in a valley no longer of vision; Philosophy lisping and babbling exploded absurdities, mixed with new nonsense about the Infinite, the Absolute, and the Eternal; our Religion a great truth groaning its last; Truth, Justice, God, turned big, staring, empty words, like the address on the sign, remaining after the house was abandoned, or like the envelope, after the letter had been extracted, drifting down the wind. And what men we have to meet the crisis! Sir Walter Scott, a toothless retailer of old wives' fables; Brougham, an eternal grinder of common-place and pretentious noise, like a man playing on the hurdy-gurdy; Coleridge, talking in a maudlin sleep an infinite deal of nothing; Wordsworth, stooping to extract a spiritual catsup from mushrooms which were little better than toadstools; John Wilson, taken to presiding at Noctes, and painting haggisses in flood; the bishops and clergy of all denominations combined to keep men in pupillage, that *they* may be kept in port-wine and roast-beef; politicians full of cant, insincerity, and falsehood;—Peel, a plausible fox; John Wilson Croker, an unhanged hound; Lord John Russell, a turnspit of good pedigree; Lord Melbourne, a monkey: 'these be thy gods, O Israel!' Others occupied in undertakings as absurd as to seek to suck the moon out of the sky; this windbag yelping for liberty to the Negro, and that other for the improvement of prisons;—all sham and imposture together—a giant lie—which may soon go down in hell-fire."

I cannot describe the effect which the tirade, of which these are only the outlines, uttered in melancholy tones, interrupted occasionally by deep sighs, and breaking out, ever and anon, in wild, mystic, unfathomable laughter, pro-

duced on the company. It added to the effect, that twilight had come down over the sky, and that behind the speaker's head the large autumn moon was rising into the room, and throwing a weird lustre around it. It seemed a voice well fitted to harmonize with the play of twilight moonbeams and with the plaint of evening waters. All sat silent, overborne by the force of the almost despairing earnestness which spoke in every tone; and felt as if an Ezekiel, or at least a Balaam, had been uttering a prophetic deliverance beside us. For a while none seemed willing to "bell the cat;" till, at last, an intelligent Highland laird—whose name, I think, was MacConnell—began by begging Mr. Carter to suggest some remedy for this sad state of matters. Things were certainly very bad; but was there no possibility of their becoming better? "Why," said Carter, "let all men cease to be shams, and become earnest and true!" "But do you think," said Mac Connell, "it likely that this will soon occur? Do you think Brougham will ever learn to think twice before he speaks once? that Peel will ever lose his tail or change his skin? or that hanging would turn Croker's bark into music, or his venom into sweetness. Or, if the old race be incorrigible, is there any appearance of a new and better arising among our young men?" "Our young men!" rejoined Carter, "they're puppies before the Lord exceedingly, and should be drowned, like blind whelps, or clapped into barrels, and so kept till they come to years of discretion." "But," continued the indomitable MacConnell, who seemed determined to pin him down, "what substitute would you propose for our good old mother, Christianity?" This set Carter off, somewhat stung, I thought, at the question, into a long mystical harangue, about Christianity being the child's meat of man's nonage, and of Nature and Duty being the twin elements of the manlier nurture of his maturer years. To which MacConnell coolly replied, that if Mr. Carter's previous statement was correct, the world must be now, as the famous Ephraim Jenkinson in the Vicar of Wakefield has it, "in its dotage,"

or second childhood; that *pap*, he thought, in this case, would be its appropriate food; and of *that*, Mr. Carter would agree, there was at present no scarcity.

I remember nothing more that passed. I have not done justice to this conversation; at least, to Lord Jeffrey's share in it. There was about his talk a tremulous, brilliant evanescence, which defies all reproduction. He touched a thousand subjects in the course of a few sentences; but it was with a light and hurrying finger, at once graceful and slight. He might be compared to a musician running in haste along a range of pianos, and drawing from each in turn single notes so exquisite and masterly, that you regretted that he could not stop to elaborate a complete harmony. His conversation was gold-dust throughout; but there were few lumps or nuggets.

CHAPTER IV.

MY THEOLOGICAL COURSE.

A YEAR afterwards, after considerable hesitation, I at last made up my mind to become a student of Divinity, and not only so, but to join to a Dissenting Church. To this I was induced, partly by intercouse, already described, with preachers of these denominations in Strath-Rennie, and partly by my reading of Hall's Apology for the Liberty of the Press, and of Grahame of Newcastle on Ecclesiastical Establishments. I proceeded, accordingly, to the Dissenting academy held in M——, a small town in the west of Scotland. Here I studied five successive years, but, for the sake of method and brevity, shall sum up my recollections under the heads of my Professors, my Companions, and my Vacations.

My professors were four in number, and their names for the present shall be Dr. Mildman, Dr. Dogmatic Dry, Dr. Dungeon, and Dr. Bilious Phlegmatic. All were men of respectable talents, but all were considerably over-rated in their own body. None of them was truly eloquent, or a philosopher, or a man of genius. Dr. Mildman was an amiable being, of the most correct and exemplary deportment, and was greatly loved and respected by all his students. He was one of those unfortunate persons, however, who first become famous through a prize essay, and are ever afterwards striving in vain to keep up a false and factitious reputation. Wilson said once to me of a man,—I think it was of Brown Paterson, the author of an Essay on Greece which gained a gold medal in Edinburgh College—"I may

say of him now, what I could say of all in the same predicament—'Good had it been for that man had he never been born.'" The expression was daring, and only to be excused in a "chartered libertine;" but contained in it much truth. It may be truly said that no great man ever began his career with writing even a rejected, far less a successful, prize essay. The ambition implied in the attempt is small; the execution is never spontaneous; and the result, in general, is an elaborate abortion. The name of the writer is *forced* into reputation, and he very seldom is able to bear the load of the uneasy lustre which falls around him. It was so with Dr. Mildman. His essay had made him a reputation which, like a suit too large, did not fit him, and he looked ever afterwards ludicrous in his *East Indian* array. A better man, however, a gentler, or one who displayed, on occasion, a finer Christian unction in his prelections, preachings, and prayers, never lived. His chief fault, as a professor, lay in over-indulgence and over-praise of his students. What geniuses he thought of some of them! I have heard him panegyrize a poor creature that could hardly spell, till he persuaded *him* that he was at the least a Chalmers, more probably a Plato. Occasionally, he used to utter such criticisms as the following:—"The discourse you have just heard is a masterpiece, that might have done credit to Milton at the same age. Its thought is profound; its style elegant; its taste Attic. The manner of its delivery was chaste, imposing, and majestic; and the voice, a stream of music, melting as the liquid lapse of the Ayr beneath the classic ground which begirds the Castle of Montgomery. I trust to see this extraordinary production published in the ——— Magazine, and afterwards preserved in the archives of immortal fame." This is no caricature; but almost a transcript. Good old man! he little dreamed what mischief he was doing, not only to his own character as a critic, but to the youth he was puffing into premature importance, and sending home, not to study, but to think himself superior to

the drudgeries of diligence,—a Heaven-inspired divine! I learned nothing from Dr. Mildman except a tolerable share of the little Hebrew which was to be got in his class, which I have since managed almost entirely to forget, and except, I may add, a profound appreciation of his own character as a pattern of those pastoral virtues which he so affectionately inculcated on his students. I had begun, by the way, my Hebrew studies in Strath-Rennie, and remember, with deep emotion, the reading of the first words of Genesis—"Barasheth Bara Elohim Haretz," &c.—at a little window in my mother's dwelling, which looked towards the East and Jerusalem. The words seemed dropping slowly from within the veil of the Holy of Holies, and rolled on, in grand symphony with the spirit of the Everlasting Hills without. It was God talking of his own creative work in syllables of thunder! The mere circumstance of these being probably the earliest words that have come down to us, invested them with mysterious grandeur. They seemed the aboriginal "fire-mist" whence have since been evolved all the worlds and wonders of literature.

The second professor in this establishment was Dr. Dogmatic Dry. In this name I have wished to represent him rather as he appeared, than as he was. He seemed to his students severe, distant, retired into his cold altitudes, like an Alpine summit, which deigns to communicate with the lower vales only through avalanches and glaciers. In reality, however, he was a warm-hearted and well-conditioned man, full of interest in his class, individually as well as collectively; and his severe strictures on their lucubrations were dictated by wisdom, and uttered in a manner so clear, so cold, so void of prejudice and passion, that their sincerity, if not justice, was vouched for in their very tones. Yet he *was* desperately cold. The sun seems sometimes partial, or at least limited, in his favours—leaving many places unwarmed in shadow, while others are basking in his beams; but how impartial is old John Frost! How do all things, from the electric rod on

the top of the spire, down to the gutter and the dunghill, feel the force of his chilly finger! How he nips the nose of Prince Albert, as well as that of his "meanest subject," and freezes the breath of a Chalmers even in the pulpit, as well as that of a serving-wench sweeping the snow from her master's door! This was the spirit of Dr. Dogmatic Dry's criticism. It passed like frost over all his students' sermons, and, more or less, shed its chilling influence upon the good and the bad, upon those that soared and those that cowered in timid mediocrity. He *had*, it was said, commended sometimes to enthusiasm; but this was like Silence's mirth, who says, "I have been merry *twice or thrice* ere now;" and his praise was counted as precious and scarce as a Queen Anne's farthing. How Dr. Mildman's mighty geniuses shrank and shrivelled up when they came under the wing of Dr. Dry! They resembled birds of the tropics, carried up on some tempest from the foot of Chimborazo, with its everlasting summer, to its top of everlasting snow. Take a specimen of his kind of criticism on, we shall suppose, the same discourse which had awakened Dr. Mildman's enthusiasm:—"I allow this discourse to pass, although it seems to me very imperfect and juvenile. The style is nearly as bad a specimen of the bombastic taste of the age as I recollect. It is prose run mad, and, as Junius says, discovers 'the melancholy madness of poetry without the inspiration.' The sermon is too shallow for an assembly of students, too obscure and pointless for a general audience, and too turgid for any audience whatever. I should advise the author, immediately on returning home, to commit it to the flames, and thereafter, in order to improve his style, to study Addison in English, Aristotle in Greek, and Turretin and Calvin in Latin. As he is a young man, and displays respectable talents, I have less hesitation in passing his sermon for the present, although it does not certainly sustain the common reputation of this age for growing taste and intelligence. Yet I grant, gentlemen, that of late the march of intellect has been very rapid; it

has *marched out of sight.*" This snow-shower style of criticism, mingled with little icy morsels of sarcasm, did, I verily believe, more good to the young hopefuls than the soft encomiums of Dr. Mildman, who saluted each preacher, when he came down from the pulpit, in the style with which a young lady is welcomed as she retires from the piano. It was to me (in the only discourse I preached before him, I acted, too, on this principle, and came off well) very edifying to notice the manner in which some young aspirants held in their wings (some of which were tiny and short enough, at any rate) as they felt the falcon eye of Dr. Dogmatic Dry fixed upon them. This prevalent terror gave him less opportunity of knowing the true calibre of his students; but, besides, he wanted that prophetic insight which discerns the tree in the bud, the full-fledged future of the bird in the infant pinion. As a theologian, Dr. Dry was clear, learned, able, and systematic,—nay, sometimes rose into poetic eloquence without knowing it; and fine sentences used to come out of his mouth as if they had been frost-bitten. As a man he was exemplary, more affectionate than he got credit for, and warmly loved by those who knew him.

The third of our professors was Dr. Dungeon. I call him so from the immense quantity of recondite learning he had contrived to amass, although, from the want of method and clearness, it was often of little use to him. He possessed also great, although somewhat paradoxical ingenuity, and could occasionally write with genuine force and spirit. He had very considerable sympathy with and knowledge of modern literature. Best of all, he had a warm, wide heart. As a professor, he followed a kind of medium between the judicial severities of Dr. Dogmatic Dry and the feeble amenities of Dr. Mildman. He loved the young fermenting brain, and was fond and proud of discovering the germ of genius.

Dr. Bilious Phlegmatic was less a favourite, with me at least, than any of the rest. He was said, by his intimates, to be amiable; but to his students he was distant, without real

dignity, sometimes severe, and sometimes partial without discrimination. He was a learned, but not a gifted man. His dull eye seemed eternally about to speak, but never did; his stiff, stilted style sometimes threatened to move freely and eloquently, but the crutches continually came crashing down below him, and all the light he emitted resembled only the radiance of a November noon shining in on an old library of dusky tomes, and making their darkness visible. He had been spoiled, ere created professor, by the applause of a clique, who thought him a demi-god; and by an unlucky visit he paid once to London, during the May meetings, where he met with Sir James Mackintosh, Robert Hall, and some other magnates of that day, whose words he was ever afterwards quoting as oracular, whose style he did his best to imitate, and whose prejudices against the far greater genius of Coleridge and Wordsworth he had imbibed, and tried to circulate among us. The tendency of this was, of course, to produce a worship of comparative mediocrity—than which that in Egypt of oxen and beeves were scarce more deplorable. The undue admiration of all but the highest models of excellence is pernicious, in creating attention to words rather than things, to style rather than thought, and to systematic imitation. Who ever dreams of imitating Æschylus, Shakspere, or the Prophets? Their wheels, like those in Ezekiel's vision, are so "high that they are dreadful;" their merits so transcendent that it were madness to seek to emulate them; at the same time that they supply deep inspiration. But an exaggerated estimate of writers whose chief power is in their style, leads to attempts to reach what *seems*, although it is not, a more attainable object. It was an ox, not a lion or behemoth, that the frog burst in trying to copy. Dr. Bilious Phlegmatic was a man that never seemed to have looked at any object or thought except through the spectacles of books. There were no traces of struggle, or of sympathy with it, in his prelections. Had he seen Niagara, his first thought would have been, "What would Mackintosh think of this? and how

would Hall describe it?" As a divine, he had no notion of the awful current of doubt and darkness which had set in, and was heaving below all theological chairs and all theologies. His life, in short, was a long "brown study," the dream of a bookworm, disturbed only now and then by the passage across his professorial eye of what he deemed presumptuous glares of "strange fire" from authors whom he thought not "classical," and therefore nought, or from some of his own students, who dared to think and speak for themselves. Peace to his ashes! He was a good man, possessed of much useful and more useless knowledge; deeply read in obsolete, and deservedly obsolete, books; an elaborate constructor of sermons, which he delivered in long-drawn, monotonous, and melancholy tones; and, after having been deservedly respected by all, and loved by many, is now forgotten by the general public.

I had many dear and intimate friends among my fellow-students, but do not feel myself justified in recording their names. Most of them are now laborious and estimable clergymen in various parts of the world; in Glasgow, in Dumbarton, in Canada, and in Australia. I shall simply allude to one or two more remarkably distinguished by singularity, talent, or genius. One of these was called Thomas Anderson, and was remarkable for his vast memory, acute understanding, and romantic history. When a mere boy, he had run away from a school in Angusshire, where he was boarded, taking fright at the severities of the master, and had spent some months wandering in the Highlands, subsisting for the most part on hips and haws. He had found his way to Greenock, whence a ship was sailing to the West Indies; he offered himself as a cabin-boy, and was accepted. He spent some years at sea; was several times shipwrecked; and at last left the profession in disgust. He went to London, and there led a wild and precarious life for several years. He was at one time a printer's devil; he became next a compositor; he was promoted then to be the editor of a pot-house

print, which brought him—being at once the theatrical, political, and literary critic of the establishment—in contact with the stage. He fell madly in love with a beautiful barmaid, and was on the point of marrying her, when she luckily one morning decamped with one of his own associates, a reporter in the *Times* office. He became for a season desperate. A person from Scotland found him by accident in St. James's Park, sitting on a bench, in rags and wretchedness. He made up to him; heard his story; lent him his counsel and a little cash; and sent him down to his native parish, where he taught a school, and gradually struggled on his way to College, and came, a matured and steadied character, to the Academy at ——. I met him there first, and enjoyed him much, particularly his conversation about the strange scenes he had witnessed abroad and in the metropolis. He had been intimate with Pierce Egan, with Hazlitt, and with the elder Kean. What stories he told of these characters! Kean's wild tricks, his insane extravagances in private life, his habitual dissipation, his unbounded genius in all tragic parts, were painted to the life. I got a peep into the mysteries of the green-room, as well as of the lower London press, which did not certainly improve my good opinion of human nature. Anderson became an exemplary character, and promised to be an ornament to the Church. He had the most extraordinary memory, except perhaps B. G., I ever encountered. He could repeat all Homer and Milton by heart, as well as the greater part of Shakspere and the Bible. He read Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Latin, German, and Italian as easily as English. He was seized, however, poor fellow! with consumption; and when, at the commencement of one of our sessions, on missing his fair hectic face and blue eyes, I inquired, I found that he was dead. He left a MS. life of himself, which must have been a most singular document; but a stupid minister, who got it into his hands, persuaded his old parents that its publication would not be for their son's honour, and prevailed on them

to commit it to his keeping. He, however, had shortly after to remove to a foreign shore, owing to debt and other causes, and in his hurry carried away poor Anderson's MS. with him, and it is now irrecoverably lost.

I remember another student, of less talent than Anderson, but of more genius. His name was Fingal Buchanan. He came from the parish of Drymen, and boasted of being related to his great namesake, George Buchanan. He struck all, when he came to the Academy, as the queerest-looking mortal they ever beheld. He had on a suit of shabby clothes, which appeared to have been made for his father, or perhaps his grandfather, but certainly never for him. His aspect on the street was in the last degree careless and strange. He walked staring around him, like a man in a dream. He was near-sighted, too, which added to the oddness and awkwardness of his appearance. His face was naturally good and expressive, but spoiled by bad teeth and by a custom he had of wearing his hair pulled back from his big brow, and lying in a dead lump on the top of his head. His eye was dreamy till he was roused, when it became wild and glaring. His mouth was rather large than otherwise; his hair fair; his cheek-bones prominent. In company he was, then, the most blundering and bashful of boobies, especially if there were ladies present; yet when at ease, and with two or three kindred spirits, his talk was full of fire and enthusiasm. He quoted poetry with great gusto; and it was quite delightful to see him getting a new book of merit into his hands. He looked as if he would have torn it to pieces for very rapture. He mastered its contents in a few hours; rushed, as if by instinct, on its finer passages, and ran about everywhere repeating or reading its choice sentences. You thought he knew books by touch. I had often noticed his strange appearance, and was, like the rest of his fellow-students, utterly at a loss what to make of him, he seemed at times so stupid, and at other times so radiant with soul. At last the time came for his delivering a discourse before the

Professors, and the whole class was on tiptoe. I see him yet, on an autumn morning, mounting the box, trembling, but more in eagerness and enthusiasm than in fear. He read out for his text, in strong, loud tones, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and the man that is my fellow." I remember he began his discourse with the words, "Of whom speaketh the prophet here? of himself, or of some other man?" and proceeded with prodigious vehemence, as if addressing a popular audience, to deliver a figurative and extravagant harangue, gleaming, however, here and there, with fine fancy. His voice was deep, and full of a wild music. His manner was a kind of compound of Wilson's and Chalmers', although he had never seen nor heard either. He described the cry, "Awake," as a cry of *haste*, and brought a long paragraph to a close and climax by saying, with startling force, "Haste! for the *sackcloth of the sun hath been woven*, and ere that darkness pass away, the sweat of an infinite agony must have been expended, and the blood of an infinite atonement must have been outpoured." The effect of the sermon was as strange as the sermon and as the man. Some abused it as a tissue of absolute bombast, while others praised it highly. The opinion of the three Professors, too, was divided (Dr. Dogmatic Dry was by this time dead). Dr. Mildman lavished a superfluity of superlatives, Pelions on Ossas, in its praise; Dr. Dungeon muttered something about "extravagance," "no divinity in it, but considerable genius;" while Dr. Bilious Phlegmatic, whose face I had noticed getting yellow with his feelings during the delivery, attacked the sermon at length, and among other things accused the author of imitating Dr. Chalmers. Fingal, who had sat writhing during the previous part of the criticism, could bear this no longer, but, starting up (he had some Highland blood in him, and I was really afraid he would *burst* if he did not speak, and *swear* if he did), cried out, "Dr. B——, you may copy Hall, and mimic MacIntosh if you please, but I disdain to imitate any man; and, moreover, I never either heard or read Dr.

Chalmers;" and having so said, he left the room in high dudgeon. He never came back to the Academy, but continued in the place for some time. Many of the other students rather shunned him after this escapade; but it attracted me towards him, and during the few remaining weeks of that autumn we became inseparable. I found him a far more congenial associate than even B. G. I often went up to his humble lodging, after having breakfasted myself, and found him having just swallowed his dish of *pease-meal brose*—a favourite dish in the West of Scotland—and proceeding to wash it down with copious libations of very strong tea. Shelley's Poems, Hazlitt's Lectures, Wordsworth, and the new number of *Tait* were generally lying on the table. He would rise, receive me with outspread arms, and proceed to talk or to read with immense enthusiasm. He had no sarcasm, suspicion, jealousy, or guile, in his nature, but was a fierce hater, and used to empty himself out in furious invectives against the books or men he disliked. He did not deal in inuendoes or sneers, but in good, downright abuse. It was no sullen, creeping miasma of malignity, but a fiery, rushing wind of anger. "Dr. Bilious Phlegmatic was a dog living under Hall's table, and feeding on the crumbs that fell from it. But does he take us for his pups, to feed us with the same?" "Mildman was a good being, doubtless, but so anxious to conciliate, that were he bit all night by bugs, he would commend them the next morning as the very best and gentlest of that much misrepresented class of God's creatures." "The Professors of Glasgow College were about the most miserable collection of mediocrities extant. Josiah Walker was a poor hum-drum creature, living on the reputation of having written a bad poem, and being cut up in the *Edinburgh Review*. Save the mark of Brougham's blow on his brow, what else had he to distinguish him? and that was the 'mark of the Beast,' for Brougham was nothing more than a powerful brute. His own namesake in the Logic-chair was a sly Celt, who believed about as much as he saw, and had about as

little real enthusiasm as an oyster. Sandford was brilliant, but it was a forced and false brilliance. His excitement resembled a foaming cascade in a gentleman's grounds, not a mountain torrent; it was full of impotent and noisy fury. Old Milne was a Pagan with*out* the classical element; he was a David Hume with*out* the *bonhomie*. They should write over the door of his class, 'Man-traps and spring-guns set here.' The most of the others were beneath contempt." To counterbalance these savage attacks, he had his favourites, whom he spent whole hours in praising. He was never weary of speaking about Hazlitt and Keats, and deploring that they had not fallen on better times. "Had Keats," he cried, "been alive now, and called by Blackwood a fool and a mannikin, he would be no more disturbed than the moon by the baying of a Lapland wolf, than a spirit shrined in heaven by the half-heard howl of the envious damned." He read, he told me, a play of Shakspere and a chapter of the Bible every morning, to refresh and invigorate him for the day.

In spite of his eccentricities and invectives, Fingal B. was much loved by his intimates for his simplicity, sincerity, geniality, and thorough-going honesty. Great things, too, were expected from him, which he never fulfilled. He left our denomination, and joined another Dissenting body. When rambling, as a preacher, somewhere in Argyleshire, he met and joined a party of pleasure, which was on its way to see a celebrated waterfall. They stopped to call at a farm-house, and got a drink of milk from one of the farmer's daughters,—a nice, tidy, frank, fair-haired damsel. Buchanan fell half in love with her, but this was a common case with him, and the feeling might have passed away, but for a curious circumstance. On returning from the sight of the cataract, past the farm-house, a tremendous thunder-storm came on, and detained them there all night. The impression made on Fingal in the morning by the interesting Scotch lassie was deepened—an acquaintance commenced—and the result was marriage the next year, by which time he had got

a church in a large city in the West of Scotland. He had thus, as he said in his own wild way at his marriage, "been taken by storm; God had let down an angel to him on a stair of lightning from heaven." She turned out, I have heard, really an excellent wife. He was not so popular as a preacher as had been anticipated—his matter and manner were both counted extravagant; and he never wrote anything except a scattered sermon or two. He is still, I think, labouring away in the same city.

There was another curious genius, a great intimate of Buchanan's and mine, called Alaster MacTavish. This youth came from the banks of Loch Awe, where his father had been a Congregational pastor, and small farmer. Mac Tavish was the oddest character in the Academy, next to Buchanan. His dress was somewhat less sublime in its disorder, he had more Highland pawkiness, and knew more of life. But he resembled Buchanan in his odd mode of walking, in his love of literature, and in his strange and daring talk. He had a round, ruddy, good-humoured face; an eye which gave forth the drollest sparkles of humour at times; a loud, convulsive, contagious laugh; the keenest sense of the ludicrous I ever met in any man; and certainly a wild touch of real genius. He had a passion for journals, and could rarely be seen without the last *Edinburgh* or *Blackwood* in his hands; often swinging it to and fro when he became animated in his conversation. He had at College become intimate with MacNish, the modern Pythagorean, and author of the "Anatomy of Drunkenness." At his table he saw a number of the Glasgow wits of that day, and was fond of picturing their social meetings. MacNish himself was a rare fellow, full of a dry humour, which came out in minute puffs, corresponding with those of the pipe which he smoked incessantly. He delighted in bamming, quizzing, and, when he found an absurd original, egging him on to deeper and deeper immersion in the mire. This was Addison's manner too. His writings are unequal; but some of them,

such as the "Metempsychosis," are exquisite in their combination of humour with weird interest and imagination. Mac Nish was intimate with Motherwell, whom MacTavish described as a little man, with keen glancing eyes; and full of sharp, lively, sententious talk. His "Sword Song," and "Jeanie Morison" shall long preserve his name as an author. When he died, in 1835, there was a strange story of a lady being seen planting flowers on his grave, in the Necropolis of Glasgow. Some said she was his wife by a private marriage. Nothing certain was, however, we believe, known on the subject. To MacNish's hospitable board came Dugald Moore, William Kennedy, Thomas Atkinson, and sometimes Delta, Malcolm, and even Aird and Wilson, from Edinburgh. Dugald Moore had been a bookseller's shopman, and had, unknown to his master, perpetrated occasional pieces of poetry. He was a dapper little man, with a big brow, but a very common-place expression of countenance, and would speak of any subject but literature. His first book, "The African and other Poems," was followed by "Scenes from the Flood," and various other volumes. He became a bookseller in Glasgow, but has now for some years been dead—and so, we fear, is most of his poetry. Yet he was a man of some genius. His verses on "Irad, a Son of Cain," and several other occasional pieces, were striking, and, bating a slight tinge of the Byronism which prevailed at the time, they were written, original. A proof of their merit lies in the fact that although I have not read them since the year 1830, lines and portions of them cling to my memory still. Two of his lines, in reference to the white hair of Ossian—

> "Floating upon the mountain storm like spray,
> And like a shade he seems of some forgotten day,"

recurred to me when I first saw in David Scott's studio the picture of Ossian and Malvina—Malvina playing on her harp to the old blind bard, whose hoary locks streaming behind reminded me of a winter torrent, or a frozen meteor. Dugald Moore's great defect was—that of his more illustrious

namesake, Thomas—the want of deep earnestness. He did not feel that poetry was a "true thing." He aimed at the honours and immunities, but shirked the responsibilities of genius. It was much the same with a more brilliant man, William Kennedy, the author of "Fitful Fancies." I had met this gentleman's "Early Days" in my native village, and read it with great delight. The picture of his father's and mother's deaths; that of the character and drowning of Gerald; the beautiful descriptions and the fine snatches of poetry, charmed me,—I classed it with some of the tales in the "Lights and Shadows," but thought it superior in naturalness and variety. I met afterwards with some of his minor poems, and relished them much. I learned that his career was very chequered. He was the son of an Irish Presbyterian minister. He studied at Dr. Lawson's seminary for Dissenting students in Selkirk; but ultimately resigned thoughts of the ministry, became an editor, first in Paisley, then in Hull; went as Consul to Texas; and has ended, I am told, poor fellow, in an asylum in Paris. In Paisley, he was a prodigious favourite as a frank, clever, social Irishman, the life of every company. His "Early Days" might secure his reputation for a long time to come.

Tom Atkinson was a bookseller in Glasgow. He was a man of middle size, with bright yellow hair, and large expressive eyes and lips. A more harmless, or more industrious creature there was not. And yet he swam in an atmosphere of affectation. His address, his accent, his style of writing, and of public speaking, were all tinged by it. I remember a little specimen. On one occasion, having separated from his partner, he wrote the following laconic note to a customer of the firm. "Dear Sir, I have separated from my partner. *Remember the Bard.* THINE. Thomas A." He edited a periodical called the *Ant*, which was almost all written by himself, and did infinite credit to his diligence and smartness. He became smit with the Reform Mania in 1832, and actually stood as candidate for a seat in Parliament; but was

unsuccessful. His various exertions, and some reverses, preyed on his constitution; and on his way to a foreign shore, in search of health, he died, and was buried at sea. MacNish's notices of him in his biography, do little credit to *his* heart; and leave the impression that poor Atkinson was a much finer fellow, with all his faults, than the Modern Pythagorean.

John Malcolm was an Orcadian, and had been in the army. I met him once in Glasgow, at the house of one of his relatives, whom he often visited. He was a quiet, pleasant, modest person. He had published a small volume of poems, one on the subject of Gow the Pirate, which attracted considerable notice in their day, although deeply tinged with the prevalent Byronic sentimentalism. He died editing the *Edinburgh Observer*. With the MacNish clique there mingled occasionally Samuel Hunter, the editor of the *Herald*, the Cobbett of Glasgow, with a dash of Theodore Hook, too, in him—a diner out, a wit, a master of coarse common sense, and rough jocularity—whose paper and talk were famous for their unfrequent, but rich unctuous jests; Lockhart's friends, William Malcolm, and James Kerr, the able conductors of the *Scottish Times;* Sheridan Knowles the dramatist; Northhouse, the accomplished editor of the *Free Press;* William Bennet, afterwards editor of the same journal—a remarkable man, originally a blacksmith, but who was patronised by MacDiarmid, of Dumfries, and who, from editing a clever periodical called the *Dumfries Magazine*, was promoted to Glasgow; Leitch, famous for his (nonprofessional) ventriloquial powers, as well as for his knowledge of German; and two young men of high promise, Egerton Webbe, whom Leigh Hunt has commemorated in his Autobiography, (I remember him speaking in support of Campbell at various public meetings—a thin, fair-haired, spiritual-looking youth, of immense versatility and elasticity of talent, a scholar, a wit, a poet, and a musician;) and J. T. of Glasgow, a distinguished linguist, and *littérateur*, intimate

with Campbell—both, alas! long since removed from society, the one by death, and the other by a far direr calamity. To return to MacTavish. He had, partly from nature, and partly from contact with these men, learned to practise a style of grotesque humorous exaggeration, which sounded strange in the ears of many of the students, but came with exceeding refreshment upon mine. What hours and nights of this kind of talk we had! How we "sublimated," as we called it, certain men and things. What peals of laughter awoke the echoes as we moved along together through the silent night! Under all this there was in Alaster's heart a vein of sincere piety; and although I have not seen him for eighteen years, I have reason to believe that all Galloway does not contain a more devoted minister of the Gospel than he.

There was another sterner and more talented student, named John Henry Kelso. He was a first-rate scholar; had gained all the medals in Edinburgh College; had, besides, a keen, yet quiet, measured, but intense vein of sarcasm; had fierce hatreds and strong likings; wished in all things to have the pre-eminence, and had to bear and to retort a great deal of envy and abuse on this account. He was a determined Radical, and this, with some other circumstances, led him to quit the Academy and the country, and remove to America, where, I believe, he is now principal in a college. He was and is a man of rare vigour of mind, warm heart, solid learning, and an intense contemner of every kind and degree of hypocrisy and *sham*.

The last I shall mention was, in many points, the most remarkable. His name I shall call Francis Dickson. He was a thin, dark, pale youth, with a face capable of the most varied play, not at all unlike the common pictures of Brougham, but with a milder, and at times a more spiritual expression. The elasticity of Dickson's person, the grace of his manners, and the sparkling gaiety or melodramatic earnestness of his conversation, rendered him very popular in all societies. In private there was a wild witchery in his talk,

especially when he selected the subjects from "such stuff as dreams are made of,"—animal magnetism, astrology, alchymy, and the mysteries of Rosicrucianism. Standing on that border-land which dimly divides the spiritual from the material worlds, what visions and dreams of imaginary truth he built up, and in what gorgeous colours he dyed them! His thought was often as daring as his language was beautiful. He seemed sometimes labouring with the throes of Creation, aspiring to *get behind* the Demiurge, and to say, "Let ME make a world in mine own image, and after my own likeness." He believed, like Shelley, that man could do everything. I called him the "Demon of the Impossible," and often felt myself muttering about him the words in Manfred—

"He would have made
An *awful spirit.*"

He had, his enemies alleged, a dash of charlatanerie, but beneath that there lay a stream of genuine enthusiasm. His culture was more showy than solid, and his knowledge not so profound, as it was thoroughly under his command. He had a genius rather subtle than strong, rather flighty than forcible. His ministering spirit was not a "Giant Angel," but a "stripling cherub, not of the prime," but ever near and ready to do his behests, under some of which, however, it succumbed. He attempted too much, and succeeded in doing comparatively little. Hazlitt calls Cobbett's "Register" a "Perpetual Prospectus;" Dickson was a perpetual project, an ever-renewed, never-fulfilled promise. To hear him for a night you would have imagined that next day he was to open the golden gates of the Millennial morning, and in its light to show to the world Science, Literature, Art, Philosophy, and Religion, exalted on five concentric seats around that unutterable and invisible throne in the midst, on which was seated the Eternal I AM. Matter was to become pliant as air in his hands, and like interchanging currents were the metals and elements to melt into and be transmuted into each other. The faintest blush of gold was to be detected in

the coarsest substances amidst which she had retreated, and like a goddess from the shades was he to lead her forth, and show her to mankind, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." The rich secrets hid in the forest of the stars were to be explored; the grave of dreams was to surrender its mysteries at the sound of his trump. Nay, Death was not to deem himself safe and sacred in his immemorial shroud, but this new and potent philosophy was to seek, at least, to strip that shroud away, and the elixir of life was to be poured into a pot of man-made gold. He seemed exultingly to cry,—

> "To *me* have been reveal'd, bared for my seeing,
> The fate of man, the mysteries of being;
> Hell, Hades, Heaven, the eternal How and Where,
> The glory of the dead, and their despair."

Alas! when the morning came, these dreams looked cold as clouds when disenchanted of their sunlight, and have never been realized. Yet I linger when I remember the time when I shared in the influence of these sweet and strong illusions. My position was, in fact, that described by Coleridge—himself a kindred dreamer—in his exquisite sonnet on Sunset. I surrendered my soul "to a friend's fancy," as it went away, winged and burning, amid the wildernesses of "cloud land, gorgeous land," and made every form it met bend into a new one by the force of strong but momentary will. And although now separated from this early friend for ever, and that by an estrangement far bitterer than death, I can never cease to think with pensive delight of the intercourse I had with him, and of the time when I thought his lips the portals of the palace of philosophical truth, as certainly they were the portals of the palace of eloquence, enthusiasm, and poetic genius. To our Academy he came, like the "comet of a season," and looked strange enough in the atmosphere of Dr. Bilious Phlegmatic. He left us, after attending one session, for the medical schools of the Continent.

I must not omit the lovely scenery by which the little

town of —— is surrounded. Two rivers, issuing each from its own romantic glen, melt into each other's arms beside it, and up these glens we students spent much of our leisure time in roaming. Divine were the autumns which in all these years rested on thy woods and streams, O lovely M——! and hours of richer, purer, and more varied enjoyment, I and my contemporaries never passed on earth than in the mellow afternoons which bathed thy scenery, or when at night the moonbeams poured their "holier day" upon thy glimmering stubble-fields! The world was then all before us; life was new, and its enchanted cup was sparkling at the brim! Never do any of us who studied together there meet, but the mention of the name M—— abolishes the existence of twenty years, and makes our eyes sparkle and our hearts heave, as we remember our walks, our talks, our little troubles, our large joys, our cheerful symposia, our rambles on the Saturday afternoons, the loves which gently agitated some of our hearts, the jokes we cut at the expense of ourselves, or our companions, or our teachers; the five autumns, sacred to hilarity and heart, we there enjoyed! I have only once since passed through the place, on the top of a stage-coach, but I breathed all through it a sigh of that deliciously painful sort which vibrates between deep pensive and high pleasurable emotions, and which is expressive at once of the joy of grief, and of the grief of joy; and I cast many a longing, lingering look behind, as I saw its woods and surrounding little hills sinking down in the west.

My vacations, which included nearly ten months of each year, were passed either in Strath-Rennie, or in Edinburgh, where I supported myself by private teaching. I shall jot down a few recollections of the men I met or heard while there, before closing this chapter with some general remarks on Edinburgh. I became considerably more clerical in my readings and associates than in my former residence, although I often stole in to hear Wilson, and retained all my relish for poetry.

I went occasionally to Chalmers' class-room, and learned, after awhile, to enjoy his strange, strong oratory. I had met in Glasgow a man of much natural acuteness, named B——, the college librarian, who had somewhat prejudiced me against Chalmers' speaking and writing. The first time he heard him, he remarked to one of his congregation, "Well, I am sorry I have not heard Dr. Chalmers to-day." "Why," replied the other, "that is Dr. Chalmers." "That Dr. Chalmers!" was the answer; "I thought it was the grave-digger!" He dwelt severely on the coarseness and convulsion of his delivery and style, and said that, compared to the preachers of the past,—the Barrows, Taylors, and Howes,—or to those of this century—the Halls and Horsleys,—it was Statius or Claudian beside the writers of the Augustan age. He said, "The demon of Bad Taste seemed to have raised up and inspired the man to vitiate the English language, and that, if a man of genius, he was the first in Britain who ever wrote a style thoroughly and irredeemably bad." He laughed contemptuously at those critics who likened Chalmers to Burke, and said that there were as much thought, imagery, and suggestive matter in one of Burke's pages as in all that Chalmers ever wrote; and that, bating some peculiarities, which added *race* to it, and to which none save a critic of the Dennis or of the Dugald Stewart species could object, Burke's style was as pure as it was powerful, as fit a medium for a mind of an imaginative and subtle cast, like Burke's, as Horsley's style was to be the medium to a clear, strong, and sovereign intellect, which had no fancy or subtlety. "Horsley," he remarked, by the way, "was one of the very few mathematicians who could write good English. What more detestable than the affectation and florid falsetto of Leslie's style, and he was one of a large class." He took down his copy of Burke, and showed how he had found in almost every sentence something to *mark*, either for its brilliance, or its truth, or its depth, or its exquisite felicity of expression; and how, withal, instead of his pages forming

mere collections of scattered maxims, like tables confusedly covered with medals, they were pervaded, held together, and harmonized by philosophic and poetic unity. His copy of Chalmers' "Astronomical Discourses," on the other hand, was full of queries annexed to strange words and barbarous phrases. Some passages, indeed, were marked as specimens of brilliant, rushing rhetoric; but scarce a single individual beauty, or striking separate thought, was, or, he said, could be pointed out.

Between my early impressions of that volume, and my conviction that much of B——'s criticism was just, I felt halting between two opinions, and it was some time ere my mind was fully made up. I never, indeed, became a worshipper of Chalmers, to the full extent of the term. I never could read any of his works, except that first love of my heart, his "Astronomical Discourses," with much satisfaction. But I surrendered, at last, to the spell and thraldom of his oratory. I felt a mind that can so sway and thrill human nature must be a great and powerful mind. I saw that the power was in the whole; and that, although I could not call him an artist, or a poet, or a philosopher, or a prophet, I was compelled to feel, and to call him a giant force,—one of those cataract-like minds which rise abruptly in rare ages, and gain mightier triumphs than many who are incomparably their superiors in scholarship, intellect, and genius. Nay, at length I liked to see him rejoicing to run his race, like a strong man; trampling sometimes on the rules of grammar, careless about cacophonous sentences, grinding out new barbarisms at every step, and mouthing his false quantities and his Fifan pronunciations, with an energy, a gusto, and an unconsciousness which were quite refreshing. Bad and barbarous his style might be, but it carried you away, and his worst alliterations often made you remember his best thoughts. (I remember once, while listening to a much inferior speaker, who was showing a still sublimer contempt for correctness and grammar, proposing that a colossal statue should be made of him, with

one foot trampling proudly on a copy of Lindley Murray!) I never felt him, indeed, give me that thrill, that sense of the infinite—that calm, deep rapture—that feeling of romantic and pensive sublimity, which I had felt while listening to the better efforts of Wilson's genius. But while Wilson's eloquence sent you home to muse and dream, Chalmers sent you home to act. In hearing Wilson you listened to a man sounding on his solitary way, and careless whether you followed him or not; who sometimes did not indeed seem to know whither he himself was going. In hearing Chalmers you heard a loud, earnest, and hurrying voice, crying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." The one was a thinker and poet; the other, an orator and an earnest man. Many of Chalmers' theories I thought, and think, crotchets. None of his plans convinced me that he had that species of mind which is capable at once of grand generalisations, and of attention to particulars. He seemed always something narrower than a truly comprehensive, and something wider than a hoodwinked and party-ridden genius. His vehemence in the defence of certain schemes and ideas reminded me, to quote the language of another about another, "of one getting enthusiastic and rapturous over a plate of porridge;" and in reference to the present state of the Christian Church, I thought he rather saw the evils than the real remedies. But I venerated his spirit and purpose, and felt that if he had taught the age little, he had circulated a noble inspiration, shot new blood into its veins, and on many a young, ingenuous, and gifted soul had, like Dryden's Jove,—

"Stamp'd an image of himself—the sovereign of the world."

Still, I never fully appreciated his character, till I met him once, and only once, at his own breakfast-board. I went with one of his students, who could take the liberty of visiting his Professor at any time, and bringing a stranger along with him. I seldom spent a more delightful morning. When we entered the breakfast-parlour, we found the great,

benignant genius, sitting precisely in the attitude in which Duncan has painted him. He was seated in a large easy chair; his white hair floating around his temples; his eyes cast upwards in an earnest, but mild reverie; his head and face developing leonine massiveness without leonine fierceness, and his form and lower limbs revealing that rock-like firmness and strength so characteristic of the constitution of the man, which bent not till it broke, as well as that carelessness about appearance and effect which so often accompanies strength. He rose up, and received us most graciously, and began by speaking of my father, with whom he had had some correspondence, and whom he praised as "the Oberlin of the North." He said he had spent a night once in his house, and remembered a little boy seated on his mother's knee, "who must have been yourself." He proceeded to describe the ideal of the life of a parish minister in the Highlands, which he said might be the happiest under heaven. If he were the minister of a Highland parish, he would in summer rise every morning at five, climb a mountain, or visit a distant waterfall before breakfast; from breakfast to dinner he would study; after dinner he would sally forth on foot, and expatiate through all the "Findlays and the Fannys" of his parish, drink tea in some farmer's house, pursue his visitation till night-fall, and come home to a well-won supper and bed. He would know every *bairn* in the parish by headmark. He would not give his people on Sabbath starched and stilted elaborations, but plain, practical sermons, coming home to their business and bosoms, and would interrupt his discourse often to catechise his hearers as to their comprehension of his "whereabouts and whatabouts."

At this point breakfast was brought in, and I saw Chalmers in all his hospitable glory. He said he would give, and hoped we would give, what he called a certificate of character, by making a good breakfast, and so accordingly he did. Not Sir Walter himself could have been more in his element while discussing the tea, the eggs, the ham, the Findhorn

haddies, and, above all, what he called the "cut and come again,"—the cold round of salt beef. And while satisfying the "sacred rage" of his own hunger, he was not forgetful to press his delicacies upon his guests, as well as to flavour them by his racy talk. He said a good breakfast, next to a good conscience, was the best foundation for the day, and to say of Scotland that it was pre-eminently the land of breakfasts was a compliment to its morality as much as to its meat. This suggested to him Dr. Johnson, and he launched into an animated criticism on his character and works. He said, "that at one of the kail-suppers* of Fife, he had something of a crow to pluck with the Doctor, for his treatment of that shire in his travels. It was bare enough in its eastern parts, certainly; but Johnson passed over it like a withering wind—a wind from the wilderness—and stripped it of all the leafy honours it had. It was very laughable to see the old purblind *Dominie* going about the entire east coast, poking and groping in search of trees to lean his huge corporation on, he supposed, or to shade him from the intolerable fervours of a Scottish autumnal sun. In spite of all this, however, and of the many other sturdy and stalwart prejudices of Johnson, there were few men of the past he liked so much. He is not one of your brilliant but evasive characters, who slip out of your fingers like shadows; you can tak' a good grip o' *him*. *His* hand's worth shaking, and has at once manlike warmth and metallic weight in it. I like him in his prose well, in his poetry better, and in his conversation best. He is none of your sim coxcombs, turning up the white of their eyes, and taking out their quizzing-glasses, pocket-combs, and smelling-bottles at every turn; he is a direct, robust, and masculine spirit. I would give a great deal to have had one roaring conversation with him, although I know we should have differed about more things than the trees of Scotland, or John Milton and his genius.

* "Kail-suppers." Fife was formerly noted for its consumption of kail, *i.e.* barley-broth.

He was a strange mixture of the Papist and the Protestant, neither a right Jew nor a thorough Christian, but a chaotic conjunction of both."

Of a since celebrated divine who had then newly emerged in Edinburgh he said: "He has more promptitude than power;" and of the same person: "He's in presbyteries like Jove on Ida"—(he pronounced it *Eeda*)—"when he wants to do any dirty thing he throws a mist around him." He said, speaking of oratory: "If you wanted to hear a great natural orator, you should have heard Lapslie of Campsie, and he was both a *natural* and an orator. It was terrible speaking his. Every bit o' the *body*, from the top of his head to the sole of his foot, spoke. He beat his breast; he flang about in the pulpit; he tore his hair, and he made mine stand on end. I heard him once at a tent among the hills preach on that text, 'One shall be taken, and another left.' He described a wicked child, on the left hand of the Judge, recognising his pious mother on the right, and the mingled horror, envy, sorrow, and yearning affection with which he was seized at the sight, in terms and gestures more striking and melting than anything I ever heard. A fiend he supposed just fastening on the sinner to carry him away to hell, when he stretches his arms across, and cries, 'Save me, mother!' He uttered these words with an attitude, a look, and a tone of piercing pathos, which produced an impression altogether indescribable. Many wept; many groaned aloud; a shudder ran audibly through all the hearers, and some females fainted away. I thought it was old George Whitfield risen from the dead." "Yet this man," I said, "was, I have heard, a poor creature in private life." "Aye," rejoined the Doctor, "they used to say that he should have been chained conclusively to the pulpit, and fed wi' parritch and kirnmilk over the side o't. He was a temperate enough man, but utterly destitute of common sense and common management; but set him in the pulpit, or, better still, in a tent on a hill-side, with a sermon in his head, a large audience before him,

a summer sun sinking in the ruddy west, and a star or two peeping over the distant mountains, and he got perfectly and positively inspired—I say again, perfectly and positively inspired. I never understood the words 'out of oneself,' till I heard Lapslie, and saw his audience, for both were out of themselves for hours together. But genius, gentlemen, dwells with strange bedfellows." This led him to speak of Coleridge; and he described his interview with him much as Dr. Hannay has since recorded it. He said it was "*awful* to think of such a man speaking this moment like an angel about philosophies and theogonies, and the next slinking away out of the room, as he did that day, to get an additional dose of the drug that was poisoning his existence."

I asked him if he had met De Quincey? "I have only seen," he said, "the curious *cratur*, creeping along Great King-street, like a separated shadow, or like a man Hall once described as 'going about, apologizing to all men for the unpardonable liberty of being in the world.' But I read for the first time the other day his 'Confessions.' They're gorgeous, especially his architectural dreams. That figure of Perinassi, or some such outlandish name, climbing an endless stair in his dreams, lost and re-appearing continually at each new angle of the tortuous and interminable staircase, struck my fancy much. I believe I dreamt it over again the next night, with variations." He expressed himself a devout believer in many dreams, and said he sometimes lay half-an-hour ere he rose in the morning, "collating and comparing the mystic manuscripts of his dreams," and was often struck with strange fulfilments. He thought there was a prophetic power in the human mind, which came forth intermittingly in presentiments and in dreams. He could distinguish, he said, a real from a false presentiment by this, that a false presentiment could be increased or diminished in impression by your wish that it should or should not be fulfilled; when true, its load lay on the soul, altogether independent of the will, in fixed light, or in solid, immutable darkness. He said

there was something "wonderfully queer, yet morally grand, in the thought of a brain, wrapped up in slumber under nightcaps and pairs of blankets, and the shadow of the darkness, seeing distant objects, and conversing with unborn events. It was a proof of the immortality and the infinite relationships of the human mind, which was 'cousin-german to the whole universe.'" He depicted with great humour a laughable dream he had once. He dreamed he was preaching in St. George's, Edinburgh, to a crowded and fashionable audience, and getting on, he thought, exceedingly well, when he suddenly became aware of a great *rent in his pulpit-gown*, and the sight of the shirt peeping out gave him a shiver of the most exquisite agony of shame and fear he ever encountered, and from which it was a luxury of relief to awaken.

I do not remember much more of his conversation. I enjoyed amazingly the frankness, the *bonhomie*, the buoyancy of spirit, and the child-like simplicity of the dear old man. He mentioned, a little before I left, when speaking of the ministers of Edinburgh, that there was one he thought I would like, John Bruce, who was at present preaching in a Methodist chapel in Nicholson-square. He said: "He'll need to be waited on, though. He's whiles as drumly* a pond as you'll see anywhere; but sometimes an angel troubles the waters into a glorious hubbub of genius. He's a little black water-dog himself in appearance, and is never so happy as when *ploitering*† about rivers and lochs. I saw him once where he saw not me, in the Mearns, hurrying away to fish in the river Luther, with a hairy cap on his head, a creel‡ on his back, and half-singing, half-whistling to himself, as he went along. The worthy folks there thought him daft; but so are all geniuses, more or less, you know." I shall soon relate what my impressions of Bruce were.

Like all students, I delighted in wandering from church to

* "Drumly;" dim.

† "Ploitering;" working away.

‡ "Creel;" fish-basket.

church, and hearing reputed ministers. I had heard most of the then distinguished preachers in the city. I went to the church of old Dr. Macrie, whom I had heard with pleasure years before in Glasgow, being told, by a worthy uncle, that "I would find him to speak like a dictionary." I was more disappointed with the second than with the first hearing of this celebrated man. He had a majestic presence, a full, keen eye, and the powder which he wore, according to the old custom, on his head, fitted his character somehow, and looked as venerable as the veritable snow of age would have done. But his matter that morning was common-place, his voice a puling sing-song, and his delivery dry and hard. I never went back to hear him, although I value few historical writers more. I occasionally visited Broughton-street Chapel, and was delighted always to see, and often to hear, Dr. John Brown, with his placid, lady-like face; his mild air of perpetual self-satisfaction; his grey locks gracing his beautiful forehead; his loud, commanding, dogmatic voice, with the antique tones in it so carefully preserved; his brilliant and showy criticism of Scripture passages, and the animation and ardour of his practical appeals.

I sometimes attended Ritchie of the Potterrow; but Dr. Ritchie, although a man of rare talents, and even genius, and capable, had he so pleased, of having been one of the most powerful popular orators in Scotland, was on common occasions a dry and tedious preacher, without unction, polish, or point. I liked him far better as I had heard him in Glasgow, at the United Associate Synod, defending himself on some knotty question, on which he differed from all his brethren, for two hours, in a speech which seemed one long sentence, and which at every pore coruscated with eloquence or with wit; or as I heard him on the Irish Education Measure, at a public meeting in Broughton Chapel, astonishing his very foes by the readiness, richness, and power of his oratory, and electrifying the most fastidious audience in Europe.

I had gone once to hear the excellent Mr. MacG——, of

Rose-street, but instead of him there was a preacher for the day, whose name I forget, who united a bellow, which I was told he had borrowed from Mr. M——, with the hesitation of Dr. John Brown, and the whine of Henry Grey, and of whose oratory a friend who was with me—rather wittily than reverently—remarked, that he never heard such "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth" in a sermon before.

I heard once, if not twice, the late Alexander Nisbet of Portsburgh, and knew, besides, well, that amiable and most accomplished person, whose large eyes, low, broad brow, round, good-humoured face, and awkward, interesting manners, are still before me, and for whose ample and varied knowledge, piety, talent, and heart I had great respect. He was cut off, after a year's incumbency, chiefly owing to the absurd prejudice then entertained against reading sermons. Possessed of extensive learning, he wanted the memory of mere words; and the difficulty of committing the discourses which he was not allowed to read, contributed materially to his early death.

I had heard Dr. Gordon two or three times, sooth to say, with deep disappointment. After he had preached, I regretted that he had not remained silent, and that he had disturbed, by common-place thought and language, the unique and profound impression produced by his grand and venerable appearance; his hair so silvery white, his brow so lofty and smooth, his eye so dark, expressive, and calm. He had, however, it seems, been once a great preacher; but his fire had abated, nor did it ever fully return.

I had heard also good Henry Grey, whose name shall probably be, by and by, solely remembered from its connexion with Andrew Thomson's famous witticism about the letters of Anglicanus—letters greatly celebrated in their day, and supposed to be concocted between Grey, his very clever wife, and a farmer friend; in other words, as Thomson said, between Anglicanus, Anglicana, and Anglicanum! I imagine that the last of the three terms had been as fitly applied to Henry

himself. Others of all varieties I had gone to hear; but I continued still in search of the Gospel of Christ, preached in a way at once intellectual and evangelical—adapted at once to the heart, the mind, and the imagination—and preached by one who should be not only an earnest and pious man, not only an original and intellectual thinker, but actuated by a spirit bearing a resemblance, however far inferior in degree, to that which burned in the prophets of Israel and in the first preachers of the Gospel, as well as a man of genius.

I did not find all these qualities in Bruce; but I found in him a preacher whom I preferred greatly to all whom I had heard in Edinburgh, for originality of thought, occasional bursts of wild eloquence, deep earnestness without a particle of cant, and a *bonhomie* and simplicity which redeemed his crotchets and singularities. He wanted only physical form and cultivated address to have been nearly as powerful as Edward Irving. As it was, the smallness of his figure, and the odd peculiarity of his look and gesture, somewhat detracted from the effect; and when he rose to the highest pitch of his enthusiasm, you thought not of an ocean, but of a little dark loch, sunk in among solitary hills, like Loch Lea in Kincardineshire, when tossed in tempest, and uplifting a tiny, although true, voice to Heaven. His excitement, however, in these moments was excessive, and generally communicated itself to the audience. He tossed about like a man among breakers; his eye glared; his head moved up and down over his manuscript in fast and furious alternation, and a Pythonic foam gathered on, and sometimes overflowed, his lips. His audience was composed principally of students and religious lawyers, with a professor or two, or a stray "hero-worshipper" from a distance, occasionally mingling with the throng. Bruce dwelt generally in a fog; but sometimes the sun shone through, and with what cries of rapture he welcomed him! The late John MacDiarmid, of Dumfries, once visited London, and wrote down to his newspaper such lengthened and minute details about the sights, &c., of the

city, that Allan Cunningham said that he seemed to fancy that he had "*discovered* London!" so Bruce hailed sometimes a common gleam of light with as energetic an "Eureka" as if he had discovered the sun. He never seemed to have any broad, comprehensive, or consistent view of theological subjects, but to see individual points with intense clearness, and to announce the fact that he saw them with prodigious emphasis and effect. But you had always the impression, even when he was indulging in dark drivel, without any beginning, any middle, or, you feared sometimes, any end, that this is a man of deep sincerity, of true genius, and one who is trying with all his might to transcribe for your benefit, honestly and accurately, although with imperfect success, the dim, confused impressions which are really on the tablet of his own original mind.

Of Edward Irving I must say, "*Tantum vidi Virgilium*," I saw and heard him only once, and it was in melancholy circumstances. It was in the year 1834, when he made his last visit to Edinburgh, that city where, in 1828, he had come, like another Jonah into Nineveh, and where the inhabitants, if they did not repent, yet rose as one man at his coming. That was the time when the West Church for some successive weeks was filled, two galleries and all, at six each summer morning, by eager throngs, who came from every corner of Edinburgh, from Leith, from Portobello, from Fife, from villages six miles off in the country, to listen to what they deemed the voice of a new John Baptist, as well as to wonder at the man's marvellous powers. I was not then in Edinburgh; but hearing, in the spring of 1834, that he had revisited the city, I repaired to the small chapel in Carrubber's Close, where he had been in the habit of holding forth. I was rather late of reaching the place, and found the preacher addressing an audience of twenty persons. It was, to be sure, a week-evening; but what a falling off from the days of the West Church! His appearance was ghastly; his hair as white as snow; the bones on his thin, pale cheek

seemed, in the language of the Psalmist, to be "looking and staring" through his skin; his form seemed more gigantic almost than human, from its extreme leanness; his squint, of which I had heard so much, was aggravated by the same cause; and his two eyes seemed darting a wild, hungry fire in two opposite directions toward the ends of the earth.

I thought of one of the prophets whom Obadiah fed with bread and water in a cave, coming out emaciated from the confinement, and bewildered besides by the terrible visions he had seen within. A friend, who had heard him in London a year or two before, ere yet his hair was blanched, said that, with his dark locks, iron-grey complexion, villanous squint, and strange aspect, he gave him a shuddering similitude of Milton's Satan. But now his snow-like hair had lent him a more venerable appearance; and if blasted, he seemed blasted with celestial fire. His discourse was on the subject of miraculous tongues. I remember little of it, except a general impression of tediousness produced by its great length, in spite of the cadences of the grandest voice I ever heard. His manner was calm, almost to statuary, except once, when he lifted up his right hand to the gallery, where some students were smiling at the oddity of one of his statements, and gave them a look and word which sunk them into awe and silence. His animation and fire seemed gone, from his delivery at least; and I thought of a cinderous mass on the side of Sinai, which had one day smoked and flamed in the Burning Mount, but which was now cooled, and crumbling down into the surrounding ashes. I remember, as he closed the book, his last sentence was, "I have sowed this field with sand, this orchard with apple-rinds, and it shall bear no fruit henceforth and for ever." With a sigh of deep sorrow I passed away from the sight of this great and good man ruined—a man that might, for power, have been compared to one of the Gnostic Æons, and taken part almost with the Demiurge in the formation of a world—and that had here been addressing twenty shivering or sneering auditors in the metropolis of his native land! It

was the thought of a future world only that stifled on my lips the question, "Lord, why hast thou made this man in vain?" I caught a glimpse of him, some day or two afterwards, walking toward the Calton-hill, in company with De Quincey. There was a curious contrast between the small tremulous scholar and the towering divine, whose stature a thousand labours and sorrows had not been able to bend, and who, if there was a hell within him, appeared to be able to command and to carry it calmly.

The summer after this, I spent a month or two in my native place. There I "found myself" again in Nature, revisiting the old familiar places, and seeing my glens, hills, and lochs, in the light of the July evenings of that superb season. I attended in the course of this month a tent-preaching, where all the *élite* of the ministers of that country-side assembled; and where I went, partly, for the purpose of comparing them with the Edinburgh men. Nor did I find the former so inferior as might have been expected. There was less effort, less elaboration, more of the spontaneous, the sincere, the unctional, the thoroughly simple and natural, than about the men of the metropolis. I said, as I heard their preachings, and watched the effect—

> "The ancient spirit is not dead,
> Old times, methinks, are breathing there."

The place of meeting was a grass-park, sloping up the side of a little hill, bedropped with trees, and edged by the woods which inclosed the cataract described in my first chapter, the roar of which was faintly audible from within its forest-mantle. To the east ran the river, among trees and rocks; a portion of it nearer to the tent having been diverted into a *lead*—a smooth rapid current, watering a rich greensward, bathing a deserted gentleman's seat, which stood in the corner of the park, and running down to turn the mill of the village. The village itself, the plain, and the hills beyond, were also in sight. A more romantic tent-ground was not to be found in Scot-

land, and all preachers of any sensibility felt themselves "enlarged," if not inspired, when preaching there. The scene stirred even dull men, and it electrified men of genius.

This particular sacramental day was in the month of July, 183–. It arose in great splendour; and, as usual, crowds from every quarter of the country-side assembled on the green. The first preacher of the day was my father's successor in the parish; the other, James Brechin. This was, in many points, a remarkable man. He was a thin person, rather below the middle size, with no prominent point in his whole frame except two bumps of causality, which (like those of M. C. R. described before) protruded like horns on his forehead, and you fancied at times shone with a clear logical light. His eyes were dark, penetrating, but with a little of that half-melancholy, half-furtive glance, which betrays the intensely nervous temperament. His laugh had a wild rhythm in it, which resembled Mr. Carter's, and, like his, seemed the escape of immeasurable misery, reminding you of the glee of a "holiday in hell." Mr. Brechin, however, unlike Mr. Carter, was a sincere Christian; although he appeared to have reached the Cross over many a stony wilderness of doubt, and through many a valley of humiliation and woe. His intellect was clear, thoughtful, highly cultured in the metaphysical direction; he was one of those "men of one book," who are proverbially formidable. He had not read in very diversified regions, nor with the most catholic of eyes; but what he read he knew and remembered, digested, and could use for any purpose. I remember how he stunned me when I proposed as a new book for the parish library, Shelley's "Revolt of Islam," by the *ex cathedrâ* words: "Shelley was *not* a very good poet, and he was a very bad man." Hall, MacIntosh, Brougham, and Thomas Brown, were his principal favourites, and excessive admiration of them had considerably cramped and injured his mind. His soul was too large for his body; his voice for his language. I have heard it again and again, as John Scott says of Hall, "trembling" beneath its images; the more that his

nervousness, which made him "all eye," and his timid temperament, told him that the most of his audience did not appreciate him or them. Yet his sermons often, and his lectures always, were excellent; characterised by a correctness, a precision, a subtlety, and occasionally, when he forgot his models, by a severe grandeur of imagery, which I have seldom heard equalled in the pulpit. In private he was more urbane and refined than country ministers usually are; owing, probably, to a long residence in England; and his conversation was that delicate *marrow* of thoughtful language, which ever comes from the fine mind when it has all its powers and faculties in thorough command. He shed on every subject he touched the gentle gleam of clear insight and fancy, if not often the wild and windy glare, like that of a bright but stormy October day, of original imagination. On this occasion he chose for his text the words: "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed;" and drew a pathetic picture of the world as a "vast hospital, or lazar-house," selecting severally those cases of woe which were of a generic or representative character, lending them individual interest at the same time; and after he had piled up and painted the monstrous moral infirmary, till the sun and moon themselves seemed but sickly lamps shining down on its innumerable wards of varied horror and death; introducing the Deliverer, the Prince of Life, passing from bed to bed, in his healing tenderness, and shedding on the general condition of the place a ray of unsetting Hope. I never heard him so animated; nor had I ever before seen his talent sublimated to the pitch of genius. Brechin had a feeble constitution, which he made materially weaker by the excessive use of tea and tobacco, and in the winter succeeding this he died after a few days' illness; a meek and humble disciple of Jesus Christ. He was little known or appreciated by the public; but a few of his brethren in various parts of the country, and of his hearers in Strath-Rennie, retain a pleasing recollection of his mild pastorate of four years, and of his highly refined, yet strictly evangelical discourses.

There came up, after the first sermon of the day was over, Mr. Elphinstone, formerly mentioned, whose appearance was the signal for a general rise and rush. It was, as a wag remarked, equivalent to the old cry: "To your *tents*, O Israel!"—literally so; for on the outskirts of the field were some tents erected, as in Burns' time (see the "Holy Fair"), for the refreshment of the throngs who had come from distant places to hear the preachings. I knew, however, the character of the man, and was one of the few who remained to listen to his fine monologue, which seemed somehow to concert amicably with the whisper of the summer wind through the summer flowers, and with the voices of the *lead* and the river sounding on their musical way through the adjacent woods. He took for his text: "This is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." His appearance and manner were strange. His face was long, thin, colourless, with a rapt yet mild expression lying on it, like a sleepy sunshine, and animating its otherwise dull expanse: it seemed a bit of chaos, with the light of creation just beginning to gleam on, but not yet entirely illumining it. His delivery was slow; his gesture awkward; his voice strong, and harsh in its higher notes, low and almost inaudible when it sunk into its plaintive keys. His sermon on this occasion, as on others, consisted of strong evangelical sense, deeply coloured with poetic imagination; and had his manner been commensurate, or had even his matter been always or generally worthy of his genius, he might have been as popular as he was the reverse. But his wing often flagged; and there is no sight more painful, even to a vulgar eye, than an eagle lamed and sprawling on the ground. This day he was in a felicitous mood. The scenery, the glorious weather, aroused him; and if he had few human hearers, the silent hills and wooded gorges seemed listening to his winged words; and now and then a far-off echo gave him a lonely cheer. He shone most in his description of the

Flood. He brought the scene home to the imaginations of his hearers, by begging them to fancy the "waters of Noah" involving their own sweet valley and village; choking the voice of those murmuring streams; "strangling like a serpent" that cataract, the sound of which was now in their ears, and which was the glory and the terror of the country-side; surmounting the "high finger" which pointed from their white parish church to heaven; and reaching at last the summit of Ben-Ample, which was, as he spoke, visible in the distance over the tops of the meaner hills. He next painted a group who had fled to that mountain; a shepherd, and his dog clinging to him, swallowed up by the waves; a mother, herself deep in the waters, but holding her screaming child above them; "from yonder precipice," and on "that cairn on the summit," a defiant and desperate blasphemer taking his stand, alone but unsubdued, spurning with his feet the foaming surge, warming his hands at the lightnings, mating his fierce eye with the raging elements and the darkened sun, and lifting up a last proud shout above the thunder of the great sea-billows, as they were engulphing him in the abyss. And then—supposing the waters to have done their work—he took up a lamentation for a drowned world, which, although extravagant, was certainly not devoid of fine touches. I remember it imperfectly; but I think he wailed for the "mountains of the old earth, for its cities, its teeming populations, its fair valleys, its children—not the degenerate and feeble men of later days, but a generation of giants;" and having wound it up to a climax, he conceived the question "Why?" to be asked over this weltering world of waters; and the deep dreadful reply coming up from all its caverns, in "groanings that could not be uttered," "*Sin!*" and "sin," he added, "not satisfied with all these victims, but still crying out: Give! give! I require a world once more—'salted with fire?'" He then changed the tone of his discourse, and described the deluge of wrath subsided, and the rainbow of the Covenant shining above the fast-settling waters. And

curiously enough, as he spoke, a black cloud, which had very suddenly arisen over a hill of pines to the south-east, showed, as it came in opposition to the sun, a lovely rainbow. The preacher caught the omen, and cried out: "Look there, brethren! behold an emblem of the rainbow of the Covenant! The rain of Divine wrath is passing away, and there is shelter and salvation for you yonder." The effect was great; and I wished that the multitudes who had vanished at his coming had remained; till I remembered that many of them would not have appreciated the sermon though they had heard it, and that had the preacher found himself in what to him was the hampering presence of a miscellaneous multitude, many of the finest ideas would never have occurred to his mind.

> "But now the tent has changed its voice,
> There's peace and rest no longer."

Like electric influence there flew from the tent to the tents, the tidings that a great *gun*, as they called him, was about to open his mouth. And open it he did, with a vengeance! The speaker, named Henderson, and who came from a distant northern city, was a tall, red-cheeked, fair-haired young man, elaborately dressed in the height of the then-prevalent clerical fashion, with hair on end, as if anticipating the wonders of its owner's oratory; with what Rowland Hill would have called the "seals of his ministry" dangling large and manifold at his watch-chain, with an acre of linen distributed around his breast and neck—the very type, in short, of a vulgar Adonis. He gave out for his text: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." He read these awful words, not with solemn reverence, but with thundering pomp, as if he stood above them with the Comer, and not beneath them, like all that race to whom He is to come. And then he proceeded to an eager, thrilling, weeping multitude, to pour out a torrent of exaggerated common-place, crossed by shafts of terror, and inspirited by cries of claptrap, such as I never heard before nor since. He described the Judge as coming in "clouds red

as his own blood." He pictured his procession from heaven to earth, much as the newspapers of the day chronicled George the Fourth's progress from London to Edinburgh. He seated him at last in "a judgment-seat shaped somewhat like a chair!" He then brought in criminal after criminal before Him; the thief, the drunkard, the licentious person, the hypocrite, the papist, the infidel, and, in fine, the devil, "covering his face for shame with his black wings," and gave out the several sentences of their condemnation. At this point, looking down toward the village, he suddenly stopped, stared eagerly for a few moments, and then cried out: "Fire! fire! fire!" All heads were turned round for an instant; the next, many exclaimed "Where? where?" and then the preacher, with a fearful toss of the head, and with the deepest *sotto voce*, replied: "In hell, preparing for the sinner." His manner was in keeping with the matter. Now he disappeared almost out of sight of his hearers, going down into the tent as if it were bottomless; and now he seemed to wish to leap over it, and swim away through the thick of the audience. Now he struck the Bible; now he exalted his voice to a roar, and now he sunk it to a whisper; now he stamped furiously, and now he went through manœuvres reminding one of the sword dance at the Braemar games. And although here and there I observed a quizzical or dissatisfied look among his hearers, yet on the whole the impression was prodigious, and, I hope, salutary on the ruder portion of them. Even the more refined and fastidious owned that there was in him great natural eloquence, thoroughly spoiled.

The evening was now drawing nigh, and the evening sermon, reckoned by many the culmination of the whole day's proceedings, had yet to be delivered. I thought, as I looked above and around at that transcendent July eve, never could there be a more favourable opportunity for the display of true oratorical genius. The fervours of the day had subsided, and a cool breeze was blowing gently on our faces. The great moon had just begun to appear in the south-east, and was

rapidly changing from silver to gold through the alchymy of the approaching night. The day was seen dying over the top of the western hills; and, although the sun was hid, rays shooting up from his deathbed of victory were visible. The woods assumed a pensive glory; the streams ran with a softer, deeper note; evening, the autumn of the day, shed more spiritual hues on the countenances, and gave more high-toned emotions to the hearts of the throng. The last preacher of the occasion now ascended the tent. He was a tall and very thin man, of about thirty-five years of age, at least six feet two in stature, with thick masses of fair hair falling over his shoulders, a rather long face, sharp, sagacious eyes, a nose nearly Roman in its outline, and a cheek flushed with a hectic red. A certain pensive expression, often, as with him, the prognostic of early death, lay on his countenance. His name was Johnstone: he was reputed a man of great eloquence, information, talent, and heart. I had never seen him before, and listened with intense interest. He took for his text the words: "It is appointed unto all men once to die." In the matter of the sermon I was disappointed. It consisted chiefly of the old venerable common-places on the subject, conveyed in language of considerable spirit and elegance, rather than with originality, felicity, or boldness. But this I was barely able to perceive, while hurried away as I was by the overpowering fervour and enthusiasm of his manner. His discourse might be only a straw; but it was a straw borne on the breath of a whirlwind. He might be compared to

> "Old ocean into tempest toss'd,
> To waft a feather or to drown a fly;"

but it *was* ocean in all his might and majestic fury. There was a glare of excitement about the whole man; *vividi oculi, vivida vultus, omnia vivida.* He had no elocutionary tricks; but he had a voice of thunder, an eye of fire, the utmost rapidity of utterance; and his arms, which were immensely long, were now swung over his head, now stretched implor-

ingly to his audience, now folded on his breast, and now lifted up, like those of one taking an oath, to heaven. He did not preach above half an hour; but the audience breathed only thrice during the course of it—breathing mingled, on the part of many, with tears. At the close, and just as he had conveyed the soul of the Christian into heaven, the evening-star shone forth over the brow of Ben-Ample, and seemed to meet the eye of the impassioned orator, who cried, "He shall shine more brightly than that beautiful star in the kingdom of his heavenly Father. And oh! brethren, if you would shine like him yonder, live like him here." After uttering these words, he closed the sermon, and sank back thoroughly exhausted. Johnstone was a most amiable, and, I believe, a good man; and died, a few years after this visit to Strath-Rennie, beloved, admired, and pitied by all who knew him.

The services of the sacramental day (the Communion had taken place in the church, where each of the ministers I have described had, seriatim, served a table*) were now over; but I had the privilege of being asked to the reunion which took place in the manse after, as well as, on the succeeding day, to the "Monday dinner." This was always (our readers will find it described in "Peter's Letters," I suspect, by Wilson) a grand affair. There was a load off the minds of the brethren, and they were quite ready for a little innocent enjoyment; and anything, on such occasions, overpassing the bounds of moderate exhilaration, I never witnessed. I found myself once more in the old manse where my father had died. I could not, indeed, say, with Cowper—

"Children not his had trode my nursery floor,"

for Mr. Brechin was unmarried; but still, the aspect of the house seemed new, and at first somewhat cold to me.

* "Served a table." In Scotland the Communion is celebrated not at once, but at successive tables; and each of the companies sitting down at these is separately addressed by the clergyman, or clergymen.

There, to the east, were the little green, and the seat below the cherry-tree; and, to the west, the long park, fringed by the trees, and the brook; but where the tall, robust figure, the eager, kindly countenance, the beaming smile, the teeming anecdote, the hearty laugh, of my dear old parent? The dining-room was plainly, but well furnished; but where the little black print of Sir Ralph Abercromby on horseback? (I remember a minister asking me, when a boy, if I would not like to get up on that horse; to which my *canny* reply was, "I'll wait till the mar? comes doon!") Where the small collection of well-bound books — Macrie's "Life of Knox," and various works of Hannah More, presented to my father by the respective authors? where many other landmarks of memory? Gone! for ever gone! It was in this room, I remembered, where the medical men retired from my father's dying bed, to hold a final consultation; and it was into that bedroom, communicating with it by a side-door, that one of my sisters, in her anxiety, had gone and overheard them coming to the sad conclusion that they could do no more. All this somewhat darkened and disturbed my mind, when I came in and found the room filled with a company of joyous strangers. But I soon revived, and entered into the spirit and the humours of the happy scene, where sociality was smiling and good-humour gleaming on every countenance — where a bond of brotherhood was making every heart one — and where, above the innocent hilarity, and around the bounteous board, were flashing the eyes of wit, and waving the wing of poetic genius. Johnstone was as dashing a talker as he was a preacher, and spoke, indeed, with far greater precision and in terser language at table than in the pulpit. He was intimately versed with the facts both of history and geography, and could have extemporized a miniature outline of universal history, or drawn an off-hand map of the globe. He astonished on one occasion a missionary from the South Seas, by displaying a more thorough knowledge of Otaheite and Owhyhee than he himself had. He had also read

much in all metaphysical authors, and could state with the utmost fluency, and illustrate with much felicity, the theories of such thinkers as Descartes, Malebranche, Leibnitz, Locke, Hume, Reid, and Brown. It was Brechin's manner to allow him to go on in this triumphant, chevalier-like style, till, perhaps, he saw some weak point or crevice, when he was sure to strike in, and, by a few subtle Socratic questions, to pin the brilliant, fiery dogmatist to the dust, till, the topic being changed, he was again at liberty to dash off at the same speed in a new direction. He stated, for instance, the theory, that the *only* difficulty in metaphysics was the origin of evil (a theory Whately, too, and Henry Rogers have advocated), and proceeded with considerable dexterity and eloquence to describe difficulty after difficulty—the miseries of the world, the doctrine of eternal punishment, the fall of man and of devils—disappearing one after another in the "black maw of that aboriginal monster," when Brechin quietly interposed:—"Yes, it engulphs much, but explains nothing—neither itself nor the being of God;" and proceeded to show that the really aboriginal and absorbing difficulty was the eternal existence of God, to which the origin of evil was second both in date and in importance. Mr. Elphinstone enjoyed these tournaments, but rarely mingled with them. Instead of this, he threw in sometimes a little anecdote, a brief burst of enthusiasm about a favourite book or scene, a humorous thought, and occasionally had nothing more to contribute than a placid smile, which seemed a sentence of sunshine inscribed on his lips. One of his remarks only I remember. The talk turned upon the difference between the Edinburgh and the Glasgow people. Mr. Elphinstone said, the "Edinburgh man reminded him of a bubbly-jock* prancing along, all pomp, idleness, and feathers; and the Glasgow man of a clocking-hen, all useful, although somewhat ostentatious bustle and self-important activity." I found Henderson a fine, hearty, jocular person. He described with great glee the different scales of popularity

* "Bubbly-jock;" turkey-cock.

which prevailed in the town where he was the pastor, and at that time the most popular preacher. There were four species of the recognised popular man. There was, first, the thumper; second, the groaner; third, the kicker, or, as they pronounced it, the "kucker." The first confined his fury to the Bible; the second extended his to the air, and the ears of the audience; and the third included the pulpit-sides and floor in his assaults. But there was a fourth class which combined the characteristics of all three; "and to that," he added, "I flatter myself that *I* belong." He painted a ludicrous contest for popularity, carried on in alternate addresses or sermons, between two famous mob-orators (of whom, I suspect, he was one), in which the superiority, which had hung dubious a whole sacramental day, was decided in the evening in favour of one of them by a fell and fortunate kick, which (the Bible boards had been demolished, and the candlesticks overturned long before) broke a footboard, and laid the foundation of a fame; and that both the speakers were seized with a hoarseness, from their loud exercitation of their lungs, which continued for some days. To tell this, I thought, was carrying the joke rather far. There was altogether much enjoyment, although only a few glasses of wine were consumed; and a large whisky-bottle left the table untouched; one of the ministers saying, that he never could see such an article without fancying it surrounded by a scale of labels descending from the top to the bottom; an inch or two down, "Exhilaration;" farther down, "Excitement;" farther down, "Fury;" farther down, "Frenzy;" farther down, "Death;" and at the bottom, "Damnation."

I had afterwards some little talk with Mr. Brechin, and enjoyed much his strong sense, good taste, and subtle reflection. He accompanied me on my return to Edinburgh, as far as where the moors described in the second chapter were separated from the hill-side, sloping down to the level of Strath-Rennie, by a little bridge. We sat down to rest ourselves on the ledge. It was the afternoon of an August day,

and the sullen face of the moorlands was all smiling with purple heather, and humming with bees and winged insects of every kind. I never had found him so communicative. He said he had come to Strath-Rennie a disappointed man, and perplexed, moreover, with terrible doubts; but added, "Blessings on these dark rugged hills (they were towering up to the north-west, like a saw of ebon-coloured iron distinctly defined against a glowing sky), I would not exchange what I have learned of God—Jesus—man—myself, amid their silent circuit, for ten thousand worlds!" As he wrung my hand in parting, he said, "My dear lad, you may—you must, with your temperament—doubt; but, for God's sake, never disbelieve, never despair, and you will come at last to that resolution of your doubts which only patience, prayer, and peace of conscience can bestow." He turned rapidly down the valley, and I pursued southwards my lingering and lonely way. I never saw him again.

And now came the last winter I was ever to reside for any length of time in the Modern Athens; and a miserable and dark winter it turned out to be. I shall, first, however, record one or two things which relieved, to some extent, the gloom of this year.

I became acquainted with David Scott the painter—that sullen, amiable man—that demi-Dante in genius—that noble Puritanic mind and heart, fallen on an infidel age. How a town like Edinburgh ever produced a David Scott, I never understood; but she succeeded in doing so; and, having done so, she did another deed, as if in atonement and contradiction—she shed on him her selectest sceptical influences. Having painted a man, she poured round him an evil elixir, which darkened the portrait to a caricature and a mockery. David Scott was of Baptist parents, and ought to have transfigured and spiritualized all the sceptical doubts which crossed his mind, as a greater Baptist than he, John Foster, did, into a still, sombre sunlight, the prefiguration of a grand miraculous morrow; instead of which, he allowed them to sit

steadfast and changeless, like clouds in the sky of a painted deluge, over his head, and seemed even to wish them to be eternal. Poor fellow! how I pitied him!—the Puritan by nature, caught in the gossamer meshes of Pantheism, and becoming actually the one Pantheistic painter extant—at least the only one I ever knew who possessed any genius. I used occasionally to visit him in his painting-room, or "chapel," as it was sometimes called, and knew not whether more to wonder at the stern and solemn works of the painter's pencil which crowded the walls, or at the unfinished but magnificent sketch or outline of Nature's finger, the painter himself. He was a tall, thin, spectral-looking man, with fair hair, and a pale, grave, earnest face; a frame through which you were tempted to doubt if a single drop of blood circulated—it seemed filled with some "celestial ichor;" and a voice, slow, solemn, deep, and cavernous. His talk was not copious, but precious thoughts came forth at times from his lips. He gave you the impression, not of brightness or splendour of genius, so much as of earnestness and unearthliness. You saw a man "living collaterally or aside" to the world, and inhabiting a bower of contemplation, lighted up by a fading autumn sky. A kind of dull, divine wonder at the universe seemed to look out at his eyes, and to subdue and sadden his whole being. He was unquestionably unhappy; but his unhappiness seemed a part of his art—the *black* in his box of colours. The subjects of his pictures were almost all solemn, if not tragic; and I was often tempted to say in his painting-room, "How dreadful is this place!" On one side leant, like a wearied Atlas, his great picture of Vasco di Gama passing the Cape. Behind was King Richard receiving his ill-fated nephews. In front rose the blind Ossian listening to the harp of Malvina. In a dim corner of the room, perceiving something dark, and "shadowing with wings," in the shape of a picture, I asked the artist what it was, and almost shuddered as I heard the reply, in his sepulchral tones—"It is from Homer, and represents Sleep and Death carrying

Sarpedon to the grave." A person once said to him, "Scott, were a contract made for painting the walls of Pandemonium, you would carry it even against John Martin; for if he understands better than you or any man the words 'blackness of darkness'—the mere colouring of Perdition—you are up to its inmost soul."

The last time I saw David Scott was in the year 1848 at Stirling. I had been visiting Drummond's Agricultural Museum, and looking at its various specimens of ploughs, &c., when suddenly I became aware of a very different specimen. At a window which looked out on the beautiful Links of Forth, and the green Ochils, shining in the lovely light of a September afternoon, stood David Scott, and the appearance of his tall, gaunt form, and thin, pensive face, resembled an apparition. I was, however, as much delighted as surprised. It was like the angel who came to Gideon as he was in the field, and surrounded by implements of husbandry. He had been engaged in preparing designs illustrative of Nichol's "Architecture of the Heavens," which would have brought him in both profit and fame had he lived. He said that he had a poem ready for the press, but could get no publisher to undertake it. It was to be entitled, "British Deed." A part of it has since been published by his admirable brother, W. B. Scott, in his life of David. It is hardly worthy of his genius. He died during the following winter. He was unquestionably a man of great original genius, but with talents and taste not proportionate to it; and therefore his thought was never fully uttered, and its unexpressed residuum lay like a load on his heart, and, along with his creed, crushed him. His death-bed was characterised by a kind of ghastly tranquillity and resignation, to me more painful than curses and teeth-gnashings would have been. Verily, the peace of a dying Pantheist "passeth all understanding." Yet I dearly loved the man, admired his genius, and deeply cherish his memory.

This winter I went occasionally to a short course of

lectures given in conjunction by two young men of great promise,—Samuel Brown and Edward Forbes. Edward Forbes, since the well-known Professor of Natural History, first in King's College, London, and afterwards, till his premature and lamented death, in Edinburgh, was then a conspicuous character on the streets and in the saloons of the Modern Athens. He was a thin, sharp-faced youth, with long black hair, and was often seen walking arm in arm with one Cunningham,—a promising geologist, long since dead, whose hair, as profuse as Forbes', but of a bright yellow colour, formed a piquant contrast. Both belonged to a gay and brilliant clique of young philosophers, who called themselves the "Order of Truth," and wore a particular badge, consisting of a red riband, with a silver triangle, inscribed with the three Greek initial letters ε. ο. μ., which were supposed by the initiated to stand for ἔρως, οἶνος, μάθησις. Forbes was an interesting, if hardly an eloquent lecturer. His forte was distinct, exhaustive statement, both of principles and facts. His powers of classification and research were compared by his friends to those of Cuvier, and had he lived, he might probably have fulfilled their prophecy. He was in private, I understood, a very delightful person. Samuel Brown was much more of the enthusiast and the man of genius. He had a pale, sickly, but expressive face, immense elasticity of body, a voice not strong, but musical, and which, as he went on, became tremulous with impassioned enthusiasm,—language dashed with a slight affectation of Coleridgeism, and, latterly, of Carlyleism, but copious, adventurous, and highly eloquent,—and a manner in which you did not know whether more to admire the abandonment and impulse—the torrent and tempest of feeling—or the taste, tact, and temperance which gave the whirlwind an aspect of "smoothness." Some of his highly-wrought passages and perorations produced greater effects on his audience than anything I almost ever heard. I saw even mechanics become pale, then flush like fire, and then get pale again, as he was

"sounding on his dim and perilous way," especially once when he was describing the possible annihilation of the universe, he the while annihilating all sound and breath in his hearers, and leaving them conscious of nothing but a voice, warbling the elegy of the vast All. He had, even then, his detractors, who accused him of conceit, clap-trap, affectation; but they, too, were sometimes obliged to feel, if they did not acknowledge, the power and charm of his eloquence. I never heard him again till his appearance at the Great Philosophic Feed in Edinburgh, November 1846. This course of lectures was not successful. Neither he nor Forbes was then sufficiently known, and there were more people inclined to wonder at the presumption of the two young men than to appreciate their eloquence, insight, knowledge, and genius.

This winter, I said, was a melancholy one to me. I know not how it is, but to men, as well as to the world, there are some years darkened by a baleful influence, as though comets crossed the mental, as well as the material sky, and shed from their horrid hair fears, doubts, and forebodings on the soul. This was to me, at least, a year marked by a black stone. Principally through anxious religious doubts, I lost my appetite; I slept only in broken intervals; I spent hours in walking, like an unlaid ghost, through the streets of the old town; or sometimes in the King's Park, or along Salisbury Crags, or in the environs of the sweet village of Duddingston. Once I passed a whole night between Porto Bello and Edinburgh—at early morn found myself on the top of Arthur's Seat, and having witnessed a sun-rising came down and took breakfast at a little inn near Duddingston; after which I dropped asleep in the box of the coffee-house, and when I awoke, found the afternoon sun glinting in at the window. A terrible feeling of uncertainty and unrest was my constant and almost only companion. I became pale and haggard, and my dress now hung loosely about me. I found no pleasure in my readings, except, indeed, strange as it may

seem, from Boswell's "Life of Johnson," which always acted as a narcotic to soothe my mind, and which I nearly got by heart. Now and then, too, I snatched a fierce luxury from Shelley's poems, and from occasional compositions of my own, which,—I was sometimes so poor,—that, to save the expense of ink and paper, I was compelled to record in pencil on the blank pages of an old Latin Atlas, which I still preserve. Sometimes a friend called on me, and I dictated to him long essays, which he gave in as his own to the classes he was attending, and gained prizes. Encouraged by this, as well as by my success in Wilson's class, I ventured to transcribe five essays—one, on the "Aberrations of Genius," which I had composed a year or two before with feelings of greater rapture than anything I ever wrote before or since; another on the "Terrible in Poetry;" a third, on "Plagiarism;" a fourth, on "Eccentricity;" and a fifth, a poem entitled "The Lost One;" and sent them to a leading periodical. How anxiously I waited for the result! How my heart sickened as day after day passed away with no reply! How stealthily in my daily walks I looked in at the windows of the publisher's shop, where my destiny was hanging in the balance! How my heart beat when I took up the monthly advertisement of the contents of each new number of the magazine, and how my fingers trembled as, after two months' delayed hope, the letter, at last, appeared. It was as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,—I ought to have written about your essays long ago. Although it may be impossible for me to print them, I have read them with pleasure, and wish to be better acquainted with the author. Any time you are passing this way, I shall be happy to be favoured with a call.

"Yours truly,

"T. W."

I dropped the letter in disappointment and anguish. Here, then, was the end of my bright expectations of literary fame, as well as of the pecuniary recompense I needed so much!

I cursed (I fear) the bookseller by his gods, and determined never to darken his door. I learned long afterwards better to appreciate him, and wrote many a leading article for the journal which had rejected my early effusions. Let all young aspirants profit by this incident, and let their motto be, as mine has ever been, "Never say die." Plant your foot firmly on its proper position, and not only will *it* never be moved, but the world, by and by, will *move* round it.

The essays thus disposed of had many faults, but were not devoid of thought, and had I not lost them, I could prove this by extracts. I can quote from memory fragments of the poem entitled

THE LOST ONE.

"Thy haunts were Nature's loneliest, loveliest forms:
Where sorrow hovers o'er sublimity,
Like the soft shadow of an angel's wing—
The dimness of the mountain's shady side,
The gloom that gathers round the cataract;
The listening horror of the pines that stand
Blackening beneath the advancing thunder-cloud;
The meaning silence of the midnight worlds,
Wondering in speechless throbbings at the earth,
At God, themselves, and most of all at men,
(Shooting at Night their faint and endless shafts,
Unknowing that themselves are Night's mere foils—
But bubbles bright on its stern ocean old).
There was thy element, and Darkness there
Seem'd gather'd like a temple o'er thy head,
And all its grandeur and its stormy might,
Great Spirit, were thine.
A darker hour descended on thy soul;
Hope perish'd, and the joys that sprang from hope
Wither'd like flowers upon a fallen hut.
* * * * *
Dim was the morning as thou hurriedst forth
To the lone pool, where often thou hadst mused,
And merged thyself in Nature. Sadness seem'd
To hold that day as holy; and her shade
Was over all things; and the Cataract's voice
Sounded like wail of anguish o'er the dead;
And the mist seem'd *thy* shroud, and the rain fell

Like tears from heaven o'er *thee*; and a *low voice*
Which whisper'd madness, ran along the trees.

* * * * *

Oh! that thy mother had been in thy grave,
Or that she had not loved thee!
She saw thee—yes; and thou wert not alone
In that deep, dark, and desolate recess,
For she had mark'd thy brow, and wildly came
To seek her dark-eyed darling: but too late—
She saw thee die:
And Hell was mirror'd on her heart for ever.
And where art thou? I dare not speak nor dream;
I dare not follow the angelic wings,
Which shivering bear thee to the judgment-seat.
I dare not look at the intenser gloom
Which shrouds at *thy* approach the throne of God;
I dare not listen to the thundrous words
Which tell thy dark and speechless destiny.
Enough that I can say with lowly thoughts,
He that hath made thee knows thee; HE doth judge
Most righteously; the *depths* of Hell are his."

I had not then read Coleridge's poem on the fate of Chatterton, else, while writing the above, I might have thought on that fearful line in it,—

"Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom."

I never felt thoroughly at home in writing verse, although I wrote, about this time, a good deal for myself and for others. Now and then, indeed, my misery and doubt overflowed in rhymes. Of these, besides the above, I remember only one wild effusion, suggested by the news of the approaching comet, in 1835:—

THE LAST COMET.

"I was launch'd in haste from that fiery shore
Where horror and darkness reign;
Where the music of madness is heard evermore—
And where I return'd again!
For an oath had been sworn, and recorded on high
In letters of lurid light,
That in fire and in wrath o'er a trembling world
I should sweep on my pinions bright.
'They laugh at the thunder,' a Deep Voice said,
'And the lightning's language is tame;

But thou on their souls shalt wild horror shed
From thy car of crimson flame!
I stirr'd with my breath a volcano's fires,
Which had slumber'd in dark repose,
Till roused to wrath from their lava-bed,
In kindling torrents they rose.
In a car of cloud I bestrode the sky,
And shrieks from the sea came fast,
For the winds of a thousand storms were there,
And Death was in every blast.
'I stretch'd the shadow of my arm
Over the rushing world,
And in earthquake shock, and 'mid loud alarm,
Like a leaf in the blast it curl'd.
From its dream of wrath I awoke the plague,
And the blue fiend laugh'd for glee,
And away he sprang to his feast of blood—
And yet, have they trembled at Me?
No! the feast is spread, but of praise no more
Do I list the harmony;
Music there rings, but no more to Me
Ascends its melody.
But thou, my red-winged minister,
Child of Hell and of Chaos, away,
To blast and to break, to force and to burn
In ruin thy terrible way.'
The Deep Voice ceased, and away I sprang
Like arrow from boundless bow,
And the vaults of Perdition behind me rang
With laughter hoarse and low.
The starry volcanoes answer'd me,
As I swept on with whirlwind noise;
And dearly to me on my lonely way
Came their old and solemn voice.
The Sphere Music said, as I rush'd along,
'Spare, spare that planet dim;'
But I listed not to that soft, sad song,
For I was true to Him.
'There's fire upon Himmaleh,' India said;
'The Pyrenees burn,' cried Spain;
'Mont Blanc is red,' shriek'd Switzerland,
'As the sun when he springs from the main.'
Like a storm of fire-snow I swept o'er each land,
And it shrivell'd up amain;
And the blackness of darkness follow'd my steps,
And the whirlwinds bore my train.

I tipp'd the eye of the eagle keen,
With a wilder, fiercer red;
The panther I choked in his wilderness;
The bison in his bed.
I burn'd the bull in his pasture green;
The lion in his lair;
On the shining coat of the speckled snake
I cast a deeper glare.
On the locks of the sage, on the robes of the bride,
I fasten'd my fiery fang;
And from shivering cradles and burning cots
There arose a Moloch-clang.
I melted the snows of the Andes high;
And the condor's wing, a-flame,
Bore him shrieking down from his snowy throne—
And Niagara's voice fell tame.
I touch'd each mount, and like Sinai it smoked;
I blasted all the vales;
The woods I wither'd, the rivers I lapp'd—
On the deep I scorch'd the sails.
Till Earth in my arms I enfolded it all,
And then my work was o'er;
And again, like a fire-ship returning, I sought
And found—my awful shore!"

This poem will, at all events, testify to the reality of that unrest which I described as then constituting the atmosphere of my mind. I remember at this time once, in a mood of deep depression, constructing a kind of scale of spirits, ranging from "rapture," through the varying degrees of "moodiness," "melancholy," and so on down to the "suicide point." To sustain me in these deep and warring waters, I had, first of all, youth; and secondly, a recollection, at least, of a time when I was as serene as I was now sorrowful, as firm in belief as I was now at sea,—of a time, "when the candle of the Lord shined upon me."

I was all this while pursuing my theological studies, and preaching, both in presbyteries and to little congregations at a missionary station in the Cross Causeway, every Sabbath evening. This was an exercise in which I took great delight. I had a circle of plain, poor people, and as I addressed them

my heart was enlarged, and sometimes they and I were melted down together into one menstruum of holy tears. "Oh," cried Elphinstone, speaking about his young class; "oh, that class! I sometimes feel as if Heaven were opening upon me there!" And so sometimes I felt while talking to these simple beings, amid the darkening shadows of a summer eve, about Jesus and the other grand themes of Christianity. While thus conversing, my doubts and difficulties seemed to retire, even as the shadows of those objects which darken a stream in its usual channel are unable to reach it when it is up in flood. How often since have I, while addressing large and intelligent audiences, panted and prayed for something of the spirit which breathed on me while speaking to twenty people in the Cross Causeway! But if ever I was to come again under the influence of that simple inspiration, I had many a strange region—many a "frozen—many a fiery Alp" of thought, feeling, and passion, to traverse. In these discourses there was little elaboration, and not much poetry; but there was earnestness and pathos. My success before the Presbytery was various. Some of the clergymen were somewhat cold and severe in their criticisms; others were genial and liberal. This Presbytery has always been distinguished for its somewhat savage treatment of ambitious students. It clipped the wings of Pollok, who calls it a "set of curious persons." It has frequently since come in collision with promising youths. On the whole, I thought myself pretty well off.

At length, in April, 183—, I received license, and left Edinburgh for the country, with scarcely any regret; indeed, with very considerable indifference. I had never thoroughly mingled with the stream of its society, and never relished the tone which then prevailed, and still prevails. The ties which had bound me at different times to some of its citizens had been successively snapped asunder, and the last year I had spent almost in solitude. My health, too, had suffered somewhat during the winter. I was employed from five to

nine o'clock, afternoon, in teaching. Returning at nine, it was my custom to drink strong coffee, and to sit up writing or studying till three or four in the morning. This habit injured the tone of my stomach, and shed a gloom of dyspeptic disgust over the streets and scenery of the city.

I promised a few remarks on Edinburgh. What struck me first and most about it—next to its splendid site—was the extreme, open, and impudent dissolution of its manners. As compared to Glasgow, vice, in Burke's language, had in Edinburgh lost much of its grossness, but had not lost any of its evil therewith. How often, as I passed through its streets of shining and jewelled pollution, have I exclaimed, "What a *rouged* hell!" A general atmosphere of licentiousness pervaded the place. In Glasgow and London vice keeps to certain localities; in Edinburgh the miasma is universally diffused. In Glasgow, young men coming from the country are welcomed by respectable families, and this becomes their safeguard. In Edinburgh, a *chevaux de frise* of aristocratic exclusiveness shuts them out from the better circles, and compels them to herd together in theatres and so forth. In Glasgow, a great majority of the young men profess to believe in Christianity; in Edinburgh, in my day at least, to be an infidel was thought a proof of independent intellect,—a mark of genius! A cold, sceptical spirit, forming a monstrous combination with materialistic passion, prevailed in the city, and chilled more or less all who came in contact with it. "Lust hard by hate," were enthroned side by side. There were, indeed, many exceptions; many a noble heart, and not a little real principle and piety; and there are so still. But those possessing such qualities dwell, as it were, in an enemy's country, and are far more sincerely admired at a distance than in the place of their abode. Few of them were born, or even bred, in Edinburgh. Chalmers was from Fife, and St. Andrews had been his Alma Mater. Wilson was a Paisley man, and had been educated in Glasgow. Andrew Thomson, of St. George's, was born in Sanquhar.

At present, almost all the celebrities of the modern Athens were originally natives of the provinces. Dr. Guthrie is a Brechin man; John Bruce is from the same place; Professor Blackie is an Aberdonian; Candlish is from the West, and so we think is Cunningham; Alexander Smith and Sydney Yendys, both now resident in Edinburgh, were both born in other parts of the land; Hugh Miller comes from Cromarty. With the exception of Hume, Jeffrey, and Sir Walter Scott, Edinburgh has never reared a really great literary character. Nor has she appreciated some of the greatest of Scotland's children. Carlyle was laughed out of her, not for his infidelity, and his stern dogmatic conceit, but for his oddities. Wilson was long looked at with an ungracious eye, had to fight his way inch by inch, and is even yet, by the general Edinburgh public, rated far below Macaulay, who should have been a native of Edinburgh, for he is, next to Jeffrey, the express image of that city, both in its merits and in its vital deficiencies. What has checked and chilled original genius in the capital of Scotland, has been the prevalence and the fear of criticism. Lockhart in his "Life of Scott," has truly and graphically described the talk of the notables in Edinburgh as remarkable for its cold acuteness; its elaborate and incessant discussion of logical points; its want of heart, geniality, and abandonment. In this atmosphere every Edinburgh youth is reared, and it is not at all to be wondered at, that the shoots of fancy are blighted in the bud. The *Edinburgh Review* gave an example of badinage, hyper-criticism, and free-and-easy contempt for works and men of genius, which has never ceased to find imitators. I have within a few years met with glib Edinburgh youths, who spoke with profound contempt of Wordsworth, and quoted Jeffrey's *present* opinion, as well as his past criticisms, to back them. Intellectual puppyism, in short, is, and has long been, the crying sin of Edinburgh coteries. An eternal stream of small talk goes on about phrenology, physical science, mesmerism, music, and art; and

the talk, on all such subjects, is generally as shallow as it is endless. "Have you been at the Exhibition?" "Have you heard the new singer at the Italian Opera?" "Have you seen the fine new picture of Noel Paton's?" are the perpetual questions.

What a lofty opinion all these people have of their city and themselves! "When a man comes to Edinburgh he finds his level," is the constant cuckoo-cry; its meaning being, that he is subjected to a system of quizzing and paltry pedantic criticism. And yet nowhere are all the stalking and talking humbugs of the day—the Peter Borthwicks and Goughs—more rapturously received. What audiences there assemble in the Modern Athens to listen to a lecturer! "Curled darlings"—bearded and whiskered philosophers—pale-cheeked and long-haired coxcombs—dry lawyers, with faces which seem made of biscuit, "the *remainder* biscuit after a voyage"—students at the "barrel-age"*—and ladies worthy of being doomed to similar immurement, with quizzing glasses at their eyes, and affectation steeping their faces and figures—an air of intense conceit pervading the whole assembly, like a general rustle of self-conscious importance—such, after subtracting one nine-tenth of sensible persons, is the average composition of an Edinburgh audience. How they do measure their man! What sneers and shrugs at anything *outré!* What significant smiles of derision! What forced or false cheers! How faint the enthusiasm, unless the lecturer has got a name! and even in this case what pedantic and contemptible carpings are sometimes heard! Indeed, intellect without heart may be fearlessly called the characteristic of the town; and that intellect, too, of a second-rate and merely æsthetic kind, fond of discussing knotty questions in law, politics, and science, but unable to create any new and powerful train of thought, or to produce, or even fully to appreciate, any high original genius. Pretension and buckram, in short, without capital or reality, distinguish this city, alike

* "Barrel-age." See Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus."

in its private life, with its splendid poverty—its literature—its philosophy—and its religion. Time would fail me, and temper, too, were I to dilate on its haughty and sneering scorn for the provinces, for provincial men, for even London, Dublin, and Paris, as if they, too, were overtopped by this Norland eyrie, resting on its cold crag, and with its exalted indigence, proud sin, and shivering population. I remember a man of the true Edinburgh breed, when speaking of the Queen's hasty transit, in 1842, from Granton to Dalkeith Palace, saying, with *such* a turkey-cock look of injured importance—"Sir, she has insulted the city." I thought of the words of the Wise Man, "There is a generation, oh! how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted up." I shall not dwell on the evil that the luxury of the Scottish capital does to many a young innocent life, and how many a one who entered it pure as virgin snow leaves it with muttered curses on its contaminating influences.

My experience as a probationer was not at all peculiar. I saw, in the course of the one year I spent in this capacity, many new faces and new scenes, both in Scotland and elsewhere. I visited the fair isle of Bute; heard the morning waves breaking in Ascog Bay; and, as I crossed the hills between it and Rothesay, saw the dark peaks of Arran, the mountain island, relieved against the south-west sky. I stood, one summer forenoon, on Bothwell-bridge, and heard the peaceful ripple of the river, which, on the 22d of June, 1679, had ran red with Covenanting blood. I walked from Forfar to Glammis Castle, and beheld with deep admiration the fine avenue leading up to the front of the old mansion, its noble mediæval structure, and the beautiful and most varied prospect which its leaden roof commands of the richly wooded valley of Strathmore, the Seidlaw hills to the south, and the Grampians to the north, surmounted in the far west by the proud peaks of Benvoirlich and Schiehallion. I visited Mona's isle; walked one bright winter day from Ramsay to Douglas; and saw a sea, calm as a summer's lake, reposing in the shadow of

the heathy hills of Laxley. I passed a night, on my way home, in Liverpool; and came in one of Glasgow's giant steamers to Glasgow, reading, as the waves of the Mull of Galloway were bounding below like a steed, Christopher North's review in *Blackwood* of Dana, the American poet. I stood, at the cold close of an April day, on Balgounie's "Brigg's black wall," with the walk in which Hall and Mackintosh were wont to melt down hours to moments in high converse, within sight; with the sea in the distance, the city of Aberdeen behind, and the lame boy-poet, Byron, still seeming to lean with a fearful joy over the parapet of the bridge, which had been fated to fall "wi' a wife's ae son, and a mare's ae foal." But more of some of these beautiful scenes afterwards.

At the end of a year I obtained a settled situation in the town of ——, and commenced a series of incessant, arduous, and varied labours. These, too, and other things, I reserve.

CHAPTER V.

PUBLIC AND LITERARY LIFE.

My purpose in this chapter is less to give individual details or incidents, than to mass the results of these under certain leading deductions, which, as they have grown out of a pretty wide experience, may contribute somewhat to the guidance of others who may be standing on the threshold of public life. These deductions I shall not always formally state; but they can easily be gathered from the tenor of my remarks.

It is a great mistake to commence the ministerial life with too high expectations either of happiness or of usefulness. It is in this mood, however, that most young clergymen, particularly if they have excited considerable expectations, *do* commence their career. Flushed, perhaps, by College prizes; having been, it is probable, petted by presbyteries and professors; having gained with ease one, or two, or three *calls* to congregations; being almost all, besides, *engaged*, and straining upon the slip for a speedy marriage, their blood, when they are ordained, is at fever-heat, and they are resolved to carry all before them. What sermons they are to preach! What studies they are to pursue! What Herculean toils of visitation and tuition they are at the same time to carry on! Talk to them of such and such men of established reputation, who have had their trials, and perhaps been at one time in danger of utter neglect, their answer is ready, "Pshaw! they did not know how to manage, or how to preach as we shall preach and manage. They belonged to a former day, and did not even then fully discern their time; but we have now, too, 'been born out of the eternal silence;' we have come upon the stage, and shall play a great and glorious part." They hint,

indeed, that their principal danger lies in being spoiled by their people; that they are sadly afraid that their heads should be turned by their popularity, and that their churches will not be able to contain the multitudes attracted by their oratory; and they sigh deeply, as they think of the dim eclipse they are sure to shed upon elderly luminaries:—"But really, you know, we cannot help it." I have seen some of these persons look half patronizingly, half contemptuously, at such men as the venerable Drs. Wardlaw, Chalmers, and Brown, when they met them on the streets of Edinburgh or Glasgow, saying in every gesture and look, 'Enjoy your fame while ye may; we bide our time; and, please God! we hope soon to bury you in the light of our superior genius." I trust that things are mended now, although I have my doubts on the subject; but I know that such feelings were common twenty years ago. There were, indeed, diversities in the expectations of the men, some expecting to subdue their congregations under the weight of their eloquence and talents, while others hoped, by dexterous and diligent fawning, and incessant drudgery, to win them over to perpetual allegiance and self-interested love.

Such hopes, I have observed, were often disappointed. In proportion to the *prestige* preceding a clergyman's ordination, were sometimes the difficulties he had to encounter. Too much was expected from him. If he was not equally brilliant every Sabbath, the cry instantly ran, "He is becoming lazy," or "He is exhausted already; we always thought him too bright to last," or, "His friends over-rated him from the beginning," or, "He is too much in society," or, "He is *courting*:—would *that* were fairly at an end, and he were fairly settled as well as ordained, and had become a quiet married man, like worthy Dr. Henry Humdrum, his venerable neighbour!" If he were regular, and no more, in his visitations, complaints were sure to be made, and comparisons instituted between his chary calls and those of his illustrious contemporary, Benjamin Blatherum, who, if you believed

the honest folks, was in all his people's houses once a fortnight, and saw all the sick—midwifery cases included—at least twice a-week; the said Blatherum, in fact, having wearied part of his flock by his continual coming, and another part of it never visiting at all. If he was much from home, it was said immediately that he was tired of his congregation, and seeking another church, like his friend Rumblegumption, who, by getting seven translations, had acquired the name of "our cousin seven times removed." If he was much in his own pulpit, it was hinted, "He's no very popular—our lad—they think anything 'll do for us now-a-days; the folks o' Glasgow 'll no' be coveting or calling this one in a hurry." If he did not marry one of his own congregation, or if he happened to preach anything contrary to their taste or opinions, he was certain of a sheaf of anonymous letters, unless he thundered down the vile practice from the pulpit at once; and even then his conduct was probably thought conceited and imperious. "Worthy Master Worldly Wiseman of the Cross-kirk, used to call on the authors of *his* anonymous letters, if he found them out, and first engage in prayer with them, then clap them on the back in a friendly manner, and seldom failed, honest man, to get an invitation to his dinner or his tea;—that was Christian conduct." If his company was courted by the upper classes of the town, it was whispered, "He is too much among the rich and gay, and neglects the poor;" if not, "He must surely be a rude, ungentlemanly man; he should go to the dancing-school yet, and then, like the Rev. Flimsy Frippery, he might be invited every week to dine with the M.P." If he took a bold and public part in political or other matters, "He is a forward fellow—set him up!" If he refrained, and kept himself secluded and apart, "He has no public spirit; what a contrast between him and the Rev. Hercules Bludgeon, who was once tried for sedition, and who attends all the Radical meetings in the county!" If the receipts of his church fell off, and a reaction in his popularity took place, he was

entirely to blame, and his salary must sink accordingly. If he fell ill, his illness was judged an impertinence. "What business had he to take ill, in such a disastrous state of his church? Ill! let him die, then; for we can easily get as good or better than he."

In this, I have no individual instance, far less myself, exactly in view. I am generalizing from many instances, and am speaking of a state of things which I believe is, in some measure, past. Hitherto I have supposed the clergyman to be a man of honour, probity, high talent, or even, if you will, genius. But if he were only at or beneath mediocrity, in point of talent, and if he were destitute of gentlemanly feeling, and anxious, at all hazards, to be popular, the consequences were somewhat different. At first he generally proved pretty successful. "Fine sensible man, Mr. Judicious Slyman! none of your flowery flare-ups in the pulpit, indeed, but plain and practical in his preaching; and then, how attentive! If he miss any of his members out of the church, he is sure to call the next morning; if one leaves chapel sick in the forenoon, he has a message during the interval to his house, to inquire what has been the matter; whether his head or his stomach was affected. If one of his pupils be absent from his school a single night, he instantly inquires at the parents'; he does not wait to be sent for, or only call as long as his people are needing him,—like our minister; nor does he confine himself to his own congregation—*we* don't belong to it, for example, and yet he often looks in while passing, and likes finely to hear what we can tell him about our own church and minister. He is a public blessing!" By this perfection of priestcraft, Mr. Slyman for a season manages to gull the public; but we live in a sharp-sighted age, and it is by-and-by discovered that Mr. Slyman is selfish and cunning —that he whispers insinuations against the character and talents of his brethren; that he is behind the age; and once these discoveries are made, woe be to Mr. Slyman! The public, it must be owned, forgives much in men and minis-

ters—ill-temper, imprudence, imperiousness, grave errors even, but never meanness, duplicity, or cunning, or an undermining, tortuous policy. Mr. Slyman's popularity subsides, and all the efforts of his despairing self-love to support it are but the writhings of torture, the convulsions of death, and end in nothing.

There is, besides, among clergymen, a third and large class, and a class, I hope, on the increase—a class whose main object is usefulness. But that class, too, is often deceived and baulked of their noble aim. Sometimes they are fretted by pecuniary difficulties, or by the oppositions of stupid, unreasonable men. Sometimes Envy fixes on them the deadliest glare of her eye, and breathes on them the fellest poison of her breath. Sometimes their schemes are met with active opposition, and sometimes by a *vis inertiæ* of resistance—worse still. Sometimes, "wearied in the greatness of their way," they are tempted to relax in their efforts. Often they are cruelly deceived in friends they trusted, or converts they thought they had made; and, pierced to the heart by black ingratitude, reiterate the cry of David, "All men are liars!" And sometimes—for they are men—they are mortified at seeing the power and popularity at which, from high and pure motives, they have aimed, snatched from them by the Bombastes Furiosos, the empty elocutionists, the mouthing charlatans, the soft-lipped whiners or solemn canters of the hour, who still find in the pulpit a province so congenial, and a field of imposture so fertile.

I have spoken of envy, and this reminds me to remark that the Church is not free, any more than the world, from the spirit of malice, envy, and detraction. Nay, I have sometimes fancied, knowing, as I do, a good deal of the working of both the clerical and literary worlds, that there is in the former still more envy than in the latter, alike at worth, at popularity and at genius. This I attribute, partly, at least, to the precariousness of the pecuniary circumstances of many clergymen, which tends to embitter their temper; partly to the

rebuffs they often meet from their flocks, partly to the outlets for their ambition being so few, and partly to consciousness that the mere clerical office, without some decided merit in the man, is not now held in such respect as it once was. But whatever the causes, the fact is undeniable. The moment a man obtains any eminence, whether for gifts, or learning, or popular preaching, or business talents, or even piety, that moment he becomes the mark for ten thousand, visible or invisible, missiles of detraction. The only exceptions to this general rule, are when the distinguished man happens to be amiable to a fault; or to be a dexterous and universal flatterer of others; or to keep up a sustained system of self-depreciation and mock modesty; or to be essential to, and identified with, the particular party; or (I have known even this, in some few cases, abate the edge of envy) to have his strength counteracted by some great weakness, or crippled by some dire calamity. But when he has none of these shields against the tongue of malice and down-taking, what arrows are aimed at him, and what pangs would be his, if he were not steeled against them, by habit, or principle, or determined self-assertion! His talents are underrated, often in the most cutting and contemptuous terms, by persons who never had an original idea or wrote a decent sentence; his works, if he publishes, are ignored, or kept out of libraries, or perhaps attacked from the pulpit; his sermons and books are watched; his motives are misinterpreted; his character maligned; his people are sounded and tampered with; the most notorious facts in reference to his labours, his influence;—the very sale of his books, his very circumstances, are denied. All this co-exists, sometimes, with gross flatteries, paid him orally or in writing, by the same persons, when it is their interest or cue to "hinge their knee" to one against whom their teeth are gnashing in secret hostility. Of course, I am far from asserting that all, or the majority of Clergy, are distinguished by such despicable conduct; many, many are far above it. But I state, nevertheless, and challenge contra-

diction, that this root of bitterness, this "savage envy of aspiring dunces," is widely spread (and surely it nowhere looks more infernal than) in the churches of Christ; and that not a few eminent men have had their lives rendered unhappy, and even shortened by it, or else their influence and usefulness abridged,—nay, have sometimes through this, and this chiefly, lost their position, and been ruined outright. Truly says the Wise Man,—"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy!" And with Envy are found associated Gossip and Evil Speaking, in all their thousand-and-one disgusting shapes.

A nobler youth than William Andrew, I have seldom known. He came from the Western Isles to Edinburgh College, where he distinguished himself much. To great enthusiasm, he added a strong, clear intellect. He was indolent; but whenever he was roused to exertion, he acquired knowledge on all subjects with masterly ease, and as if by intuition. His conversation was almost Johnsonian, in its massive sense, and clear, pointed expression. I see him yet, with his tall, slightly-bent figure,—his broad, arched brow,—his long dark hair, floating over his forehead and down on his broad shoulders,—his firm-set, yet elastic and eloquent lips,—and hear him discoursing on, what to me and him was the favourite subject,—poetry, quoting, in his deep, guttural accents, Coleridge's Ode, "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter;" or carrying some work of genius, like a prize, under his stalwart arm. This youth had one great fault,—he spoke his mind too freely and fearlessly on all subjects, and was too severe in his judgments of his inferiors at the Academy of M——. This, along with his undisputed pre-eminence in talent, roused the whole race of detraction and spite against him. His religious principles and personal morality were unfairly called in question; his admiration of poetry and literature was construed into a crime; the minds of the professors were poisoned against him; till, at last, in disgust, he left the academy, and, after some stay in England, wan-

dered to a distant part of the world, where he perished early, and left no name,—a victim (as I scruple not to call him) to wretched jealousies, envies, and sectarian uncharitableness, which, in his case, prevailed even to strangle the strong, God-given power of genius.

Onesimus Oldstick, I may mention as a specimen of the ministerial gossip, the more freely as he has been long dead. This worthy man in person resembled the withered gourd of Jonah, and seemed to have venom, instead of blood, circulating through his veins. An envious man always reminds me of a wasp in a beautiful garden, sucking, not honey, but poison out of flowers, and the more he sucks the thinner, and bitterer, and more waspish he becomes. This was the case with Onesimus, whose envy had reduced him to a mere fleshless *atomy*. Deaths of ministers, scrapes into which some of the clergy were falling, *famas* that were rising against others, the character or peculiar temper of their wives, tottering congregations, fading popularities, diminishing collections and seat-rents, schisms and heresies in Churches,—these and a thousand similar stories were always trembling on the tip of Oldstick's tongue, which often quivered with eagerness as he detailed them. How he got at them, no one for a long time knew; but he always had them before any one else, and some whispered about telegraphic connexion with a certain Great Personage. The mystery was at last solved by the discovery of a chain of gossips and evil-speakers in various parts of the country, who carried on a constant correspondence with one another. As soon as Jonathan Juniper, in the town of L——, had made up a budget of bad tidings, he sent it on immediately in a letter to Martin Muckworm, in the village of T——, and he passed it impatiently on to old Onesimus at M——, who reciprocated to them *his* evil surmises and rumours at the first opportunity. Such unclean, infernal chains I am credibly informed do still exist. The fate of Oldstick was in keeping with his character. A new church, with a popular minister, was

erected opposite his manse, and he was condemned every Sabbath to see the crowds thronging to hear him. This greatly annoyed, and was gradually killing him. To his comfort, however, a grievous *fama* broke out against the preacher's moral character. Oldstick revived; and men spoke of ten years being added to his life. The case, however, was tried, and ended in the triumphant vindication of the accused. Onesimus died ten days after, in the act, it was said, of writing an anonymous letter to the gentleman acquitted!

In a former paragraph, I mentioned as one cause of the uneasy bitterness characterizing the feelings of many clergymen,—the poverty of their circumstances. And here, although not from personal experience, at least to any extent, I might a tale unfold that would harrow up many a sympathetic heart, and startle many a lay Christian who looks on the office of the ministry as a well-paid sinecure. I am conscientiously a voluntary, holding decidedly that the voluntary principle is inculcated in the New Testament; but I think as decidedly that it has never yet been adequately wrought out, and that with a proportion of the laity it means not voluntary giving, but voluntary withholding. As it is, what misery its neglect has often entailed on Dissenting clergymen, and on their families! I have known poverty repress the genial current of many a noble heart, which coveted the enjoyments of domestic life and female society, "above rubies," and which had to stifle its finest impulses, and to shut itself up in gloomy solitude,—when it did not, as was sometimes the case, seek a miserable solace in sordid vice. I have known a mind of the highest powers crippled, paralyzed, or embittered, by the pressure of narrow circumstances; and have sighed when I have compared the ample brow and eagle eye of the student, with the poor, contemptible array of books in his library, which were all his funds had enabled him to purchase. I have seen a sight more painful still. A young and promising minister, who, had he possessed a moderate compe-

tence, might have in milder climes dodged for years the fell disease which had begun to prey upon his vitals, compelled by poverty to stay at home and die. I have known clergymen of great talent insulted in the streets for petty debts, which the most rigid economy could not prevent them from contracting, owing to their narrow income; and of others all their lifetime subject to bondage—the most galling bondage that can bow down a proud and honest spirit,—that of hopeless and honest debt. When there were wives or families in the case, I have witnessed or heard of cases even worse. I have heard of stipends paid in silver or copper instalments, and of the wives of clergymen, when asking for a small portion of their dues a little in advance, receiving it in the language of reluctance, spiced with insulting wonder—how they could wish, or contrive, to spend so much! I have known of families denying themselves every comfort and indulgence, that they might keep up a decent appearance before visitors;—of others, where the children were half-fed, half-clad, and almost wholly uneducated; and of others which were compelled to eke out by mean shifts, by genteel beggary, or by irksome and unceasing toil, the miserable pittance they received. I have seen the tears of them that were thus oppressed,—the brave wife bursting out, after long efforts to suppress her feelings, into wild sobs of despair,—the children, sharing in and echoing her anguish,—and the husband retiring, with these sounds in his ears, to his study, to prepare, forsooth, an elaborate sermon for the ensuing Sabbath! And worst of all, I have known or heard of many classes of laymen, from the rich farmer or merchant down to the humble artizan, speaking with callous contempt of such sufferings, or even expressing envy at the lot of those who were called to bear them—to bear them, I must say, in general, in silence, with dignity and with patience, like men, and like Christians. I admit, indeed, that these are not the rule, but the exceptions only, and chiefly confined to the country,—but it is to be regretted that the exceptions are so numerous.

I could give a number of special proofs in point, but shall confine myself at present to one,—the case of a man I knew well and loved warmly; a man of eccentricity and many foibles, but of worth and of genius. Nicholas Thom came from the south of Scotland. He had, as a preacher, excited a great sensation, for even those who did not admire, were compelled to wonder at him. He was a man of middle size, but well built and sinewy; his head and face strongly resembled those of a New Zealander. In his eye, as I sometimes told him, you saw the grey gleam of the partition between genius and madness. In the pulpit he was animated in the extreme, and often indulged in lofty flights of imagination, although too fond of abstruse and learned disquisitions to be generally popular. In conversation he was rich and powerful, if somewhat reckless and daring. He was ambitious, but got only a small church in a rural district, where he was diligent, and, for a time, prospered considerably. Bad times, however, arrived, and a large portion of his flock were compelled to emigrate to America. He came into the seaport, along with thirty of his members, and bade them farewell on board the ship in which they had taken their passage, amidst fervent prayer on his part, and bursting tears on theirs. He called on me immediately after, and told me, in the quiet, but gloomy tones of despair, that his congregation was ruined. I accompanied him home, and tried to cheer him. The iron, however, had entered into his soul. Living much alone, immersed constantly in Hebraic and Oriental studies,—keenly alive to his own merits and to the neglect he experienced,—burdened with poverty, and, latterly, with debt,—his mind became soured almost to frenzy, and a cloud of fierce hypochondria began to gather over his gifted soul. The tone of his conversation, when I visited him, changed from the joyous and fanciful to the sombre and misanthropic, and I was reminded of the talk of Bethlem Gabor, so powerfully described in Godwin's "St. Leon," when,—as he became in his darker mood, an

accuser of God and man,—"a supernatural eloquence seemed to inspire and enshroud him." I never listened to such torrents of burning misery, beautified, sometimes, as they came forth from his lips, by the light of genius, like streams of lava bathed in moonlight. It became, by-and-by, positively painful to listen to his eloquent complainings and terrible invectives. "He was one of God's eagles chained to a barren rock, chattered at by magpies, who were free, while he was a prisoner, fed on garbage, and forced to stare helplessly at the distant sky, instead of soaring towards the sun." Such was the tenor of his language about himself. At last, he fell ill, and, owing to poverty, had to be removed to the infirmary of a neighbouring city, and in one of its wards died, in the prime of his days, a man who, in happier circumstances, might have been a distinguished ornament either of the world or of the Church. Poor Nicholas Thom! when I sometimes pass through the beautiful Strath where thy obscure and unhappy career was run, and see the church and manse which were once thine standing in the midst of the tall hedge, and shadowed by the fruit trees in which thou didst so pride thyself, and remember the *noctes cœnæque Deûm* I have enjoyed under thy hospitable roof, and the glowing talks in which the summer's dawning sometimes surprised us;—when I think how little thou wert recognised while alive, and in what lamentable circumstances thou wert prematurely removed, I am tempted to weep like a child, and to cry out, "Surely man is vanity, and life a dream!"

I shall never forget a description Thom once gave me of a scene in the Orkney Islands. It was a summer Sabbath evening. The church was so crowded that it had to overflow into the open air, and Thom preached on the sea-shore to an immense audience. The sea was smooth as glass, and bright as silver. In the red north-west appeared the lofty mountain-island of Hoy, steep-rising from the wave, furrowed with ravines, split into three peaks, the highest of which is that Ward-hill commemorated in "The Pirate"—from which, it is

said, the sun is sometimes seen at midnight, and on whose breast appears from the valley, during the dead of night, in the three summer months, a great shining something, like an enchanted carbuncle, which, on climbing the mountain, can nowhere be found. Behind, and just touching the top of the Ward-hill, the orb of day was sinking in glory, in an hour to become the morning sun of America—to kindle all the forests, and awaken all the eagles of the mighty West. Thom's blood rose, and his wild eye caught inspiration from the sea and the sun. He dropped the theme he had intended to handle, and, opening the Bible, selected for his text, "The sea gave up the dead that were in it;" and poured out an extempore prose-poem, which made the vast assembly as breathless as the sea, and their hearts to glow as warmly as the sun. "If ever man was poetically inspired," he said, "I that evening was that man." There is still, I believe, a traditionary recollection of that evening, and that sermon in these islands, at the distance of thirty years.

I have alluded more than once to the labours to which a Dissenting clergyman is subject. These are very numerous, and sometimes oppressive. Lord Brougham has expressed his wonder how a Scotch clergyman can write two new discourses every week during a long series of years. But this is only a part of his duties. He has besides this, in general, if a Dissenter, to commit them to memory; and this, to many, is a sad drudgery. How often I have overheard clergymen groaning aloud, as they paced their morning or midnight chambers, trying to fix on their memory the reluctant and rebellious sentences of their sermons! Many constitutions have been shattered, many nervous systems unhinged, and many lives shortened, by this difficulty—a difficulty which I never, however, personally experienced. Besides the writing and the mandation of sermons, there is in the preaching of them a constant strain upon the system and the nerves, under which many succumb. Nervous complaints are, in consequence, multiplying among ministers. One is perpetually

hearing of this and the other minister away on furlough from duty; and if you ask what is the matter with him, the reply is, "His nervous system is all wrong." To this the practice of preaching a third discourse in the evening (called by some wit, a "device of the Devil's to kill ministers withal") has contributed, as well as the use of stimulants (such as tea, coffee, and tobacco—the Scottish clergy now are in general extremely temperate in the use of stronger fluids), which become almost essential to support the overwrought system, but which, if taken to excess, do injury afterwards. Then, besides, there are endless visitations of sick and whole—attendance on funerals—performance of marriages—speaking at public meetings—and a hundred other public and private engagements, which massacre the minister's time, often irritate his temper, and gradually wear him down. Nothing can carry him triumphantly through these labours, except, first, a good constitution; secondly, readiness in composition and speech; thirdly, system; fourthly, generous living; and, fifthly, a buoyant, sanguine disposition. But if he be, as is too often the case, poor in circumstances and unsuccessful in his calling, he cannot live well, his spirits sink, and he dies before his time. I could tell the tales and point out the graves of many such martyrs. And yet I have heard laymen often wondering how ministers could get their time spent; and speaking of their life as a long gala-day!

It were invidious to dwell long on the literary defects of the clergy as a class. I noticed in many of them a kind of indifference to, if not horror at, literature. They aspired to nothing but the praise given by Cowper to the poor cottager—

> "To know, and *know no more*, their Bible true."

I am happy to say that this state of things is coming to an end, and that fashion is combining with the advancement of society in promoting a love of letters, particularly among our younger clergy—some of whom, however, are going to the

opposite extreme, and are becoming strongly tinged with Germanism, and might, even in their pulpits, be mistaken for minor Carlyles in white cravats. The misty utterances of Maurice, Kingsley, and the other members of that school, are very popular, too, with a class of our young divines, who are perpetually talking about "stand-points," "spiritualism," "divine meanings," "God being the centre of Being," and the "Heart-force of the universe," and who accept the stare of wonderment cast at them by their bewildered audiences as a willing worship and a profound obedience. There is more now, too, among Dissenters, both lay and clerical, of admiration of mental excellence and genius, as these qualities are to be found in men of other denominations, and in men of no denomination at all. Connected with this, however, I have noticed the prevalence of certain evils. I allude to the imitation of models in preaching and writing—a practice which has deadened originality, damped imagination, and filled many pulpits with bloated frogs instead of men. Chalmers was long the favourite model with this kind of people; it is now Hamilton of Leeds, or Dr. Harris, or Melvill, or Cumming, or Parsons of York. The worst of this is, that it is sometimes practised by young men, who possess superior talents of their own, and who hobble about on borrowed crutches when they might walk alone. Akin to this is the practice of wholesale and habitual plagiarism. Many ministers *live* by plunder. Neither the dead nor the living, neither good nor bad writers, neither celebrated nor obscure divines, are safe from this spirit of appropriation. That recondite author Matthew Henry even, has had whole pages transplanted to sermons, which have been published! No sooner does a new volume appear from the pen of Isaac Taylor or Harris, than its choicest sentences are culled to adorn the discourses of some fashionable preacher, who (having studied and practised their delivery at the mirror) gives them with incomparably more effect than the original authors could. T. T., an intimate friend of my own, has

been often honoured in this way.' He has preached, through his printed sermons, in highflying metropolitan pulpits, in which he never set a foot all his life. He has defied, without intention, offence, or resistance, the law of the General Assembly, which allows no Dissenter to appear in the pulpits of the Establishment, and has held forth there again and again. He once (*in propriâ personâ*) preached a public sermon in a great northern city, while an aspiring youth was preaching one of *his* printed sermons in an adjoining chapel. This state of things, indeed, has become so general, and so flagrantly notorious, that some have begun to allege that sermons, like umbrellas and hats at a public dinner, are common property, and that the only sin lies in the discovery of the theft, and the only shame in the poorness of the article which is stolen. And, indeed, our clerical thieves are not fastidious. My readers probably remember the pickpocket in "Pelham," who saw a Frenchman of the same kidney pocketing an article in a coffee-house. What it was he was unable, from the distance, to discover, but he supposed it to be something very valuable. He followed him to the street, and picked his pocket of the prize, which turned out to be two pieces of white sugar, very carefully wrapped up! I could supply many examples showing the application of this story, but I forbear.

We often hear it said now-a-days that the clergy are in a false position. I think I see wherein this saying is true and wherein it is false. A minister, *quoad* minister, has now less influence and respect than he had; and if he presume on his mere ministerial position, and try in its strength to browbeat or trample on the public, he is sure to get into a false position. But there is still so much of the ancient *prestige* in behalf of the clerical office remaining, that if he add to its weight, personal merit—whether genius, or eloquence, or learning, or zeal, or uncommon diligence—no man can even yet exert greater or more valuable influence, or be more useful to society, than a minister. But he must ever bear in

mind that as the pedestal of the ministerial position has somewhat sunk of late, it becomes the more necessary that the statue erected on it should be symmetrical and lofty.

I have, in the foregoing remarks, been rather showing the "shady" than the "sunny" side of ministerial life. I come now to more agreeable topics. Had I a poet's genius, I might write a very interesting poem on the pleasures of a clergyman's existence, under the title of the "Manse." Had Christopher North been a minister, what a noble thing he might have made of it, either in verse or in his glowing and numerous prose! There are, first, the pleasures of preaching. Who that has ever thrown his soul into his sermons, or ever addressed, with any force or freedom, large multitudes of men, has not been conscious, at certain favoured hours, of exquisite enjoyment? In an autumn evening, especially, when men gather round the speaker, and the stars come out, how exciting, in that dim religious light, and before that sea of half-seen faces, to speak of such subjects as the Deluge, the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, the Second Advent of Christ, the immolation of Jephthah's daughter, or the glories of the future state! Such pleasures are not to be classed with mere intellectual luxuries, nor supposed to be inconsistent with deep earnestness and humility on the part of the speaker. They are the results of lawful and natural stimulants, that of a season the most spirit-stirring and ethereal of all; for true it is that

> "Heaven and earth are loveliest
> In autumn eves,"

and that then a strange unearthly joy, like the music of another planet, does fall upon the ear of the soul—that of the sympathy of masses of men, and that of subjects which appeal to the heart through the imagination, and in which the speaker forgets himself, and is gloriously lost, like an eagle in a sea of sunny clouds. The horse gains the goal not less surely, that he exults in his tremendous gallop, and the preacher may reach his purpose the more certainly when his spirit is stirred and quickened to its depths. Of still more

delicious zest are sacramental occasions, particularly toward the close of the day, when the minister is counselling his flock ere they retire from the holy communion, or giving out the parting hymn; and when, sometimes, "whether he is in the body or out of it," he cannot tell, since all heaven seems opening to his eyes, or flowing into his heart. I at least, for my part, can declare that many a time, when reading to my flock, at the close of a communion-day, Addison's famous hymn,

"When all thy mercies, O my God,"

and particularly the words—

"And after death, in distant worlds,
Resume the glorious theme,"

I have felt—"Higher than this I cannot go—this is the climax of my feelings; this emotion, purified, might mingle congenially with the raptures of a 'better sphere.'" I need not dwell on the delightful intercourse that on these occasions often still takes place between ministers, who are not merely by name, or by courtesy, but in reality and in heart, *brethren.*

One such brother I may here commemorate, since I have enjoyed with him several of the happiest communions I ever spent. Gilchrist Hamilton is his name, and a better man does not exist. He is a man,—in completeness, if not in size and strength,—approaching my ideal of humanity. You often see heads and faces, which approach to perfection so nearly that you think a hair's breadth only separates them from it; and you sigh as you remember that that hair's breadth is a great gulf, for ever fixed. With somewhat less sorrow, do I survey that kind of duodecimo edition of a perfect man which my friend Hamilton presents; for his combination of qualities is so rare as to be exceedingly valuable, and, to a lover of man, cheering. He has geniality and fancy, almost amounting to genius. He has an exquisite taste. He has very respectable attainments. He has a sweet and natural elocution. In private, he is all that is amiable, gentle, and intelligent. His friends and his flock admire him to enthu-

siasm. And yet he has not a tithe of the power and popularity of some far inferior men; and why?—partly because his strength is not quite equal to his symmetry, partly because he wants assumption, and partly because he cannot make so much noise in the pulpit as they. But better, surely, to be a beautiful limpid stream, winding its own peaceful way through its own sweet and soft scenery, and singing its own fine monotony to the listening woods and flowers, than to be a sham Niagara, all froth and foam, without body or real force—with plenty of sound, but with little volume of water.

In the private work of the clergyman's life there are many trials, but there are many enjoyments, too. He has occasion to see a good deal of the selfishness of mankind. If he, however unintentionally, omit any of his flock in his pastoral calls, or wait till the sick send for him, or do not recognise his people on the street, he is blamed bitterly, and accused of partiality, carelessness, pride, and so forth. He has also, as I showed above, sometimes his own trials through poverty. But, as Savage told Johnson, that the more he mingled with human nature, the more, and not the less, did he esteem it; so it is sometimes in the case of ministerial intercourse with the lower classes. The clergyman has often occasion to quote the well-known lines from Gray's poem—

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene," &c.

What solid worth, what warm-hearted kindness, what simple faith, what loyalty to their minister and to the Christian cause, what strong natural sense, what childlike piety, have I witnessed among the humbler ranks of Scottish dissenters, both in town and country! Even when they are offended, I have observed them to be more placable than people in higher life, and many of the *rubs* their ministers receive from them, proceed more from ignorance than from intention. On the other hand, a little friendly interest taken in their concerns, if not ostentatiously protruded or carried too far—a visit opportunely made—attention to their children or their

sick selves, if not evidently dictated by motives of mere priestcraft—a letter written for them—a situation obtained for one of their family—a friendly salutation on the street—the keeping up of a steady stream of good, useful sermons, and perseverance in daily and weekly duties, are sure, in many cases, to excite gratitude, to disarm hostility, and to produce a mutual good understanding, which is less frequently disturbed in Scotland than in England, and perhaps exists more thoroughly in town-congregations, chiefly composed of the industrious poor, than in those composed of the frivolous and fashionable rich. I have enjoyed, especially, intercourse with the aged men and women of the flock—those venerable links connecting two centuries together. How I liked to see their old eyes gleaming with delight as the minister entered their garret; to take up and glance at the dusky volumes over which they had, with their horn spectacles, been poring; perhaps Willison's "Afflicted Man's Companion," "Haweis's Bible," Bunyan's Works, or Fleetwood's "Life of Christ," to listen to their quaint remarks, and their talk about the olden times, and the departed ministers of the church; to eat, occasionally, with them a piece of their oaten cake, or drink a drop of their poor thin tea; to see the glow of genuine gratitude shining on their faces, at the receipt of some little alms; to receive, in my turn, sometimes a present from them—a book, probably, such as a copy I still preserve and cherish, of Brown's "Self-interpreting Bible;" to pray with them, and to hear their lips murmuring a blessing over their pastor's head, ere they were closed in death! These I felt to be "joys beyond the name of pleasure," and often I overheard myself, as I passed from garret to garret of the aged poor, muttering the grand words of Burke, "remembering the forgotten;" and adding—what a high lot; how far superior to that of a man of letters, of a nobleman, or of a king! And when, in the silent watches of the night, I reflect with pain on past miserable hours, I am consoled by the recollection of these visits; of the good I did, and the good I derived

in them, and can fancy I see the faces of many a humble Christian, looking down from the climes of glory, and that I hear their voices bidding me be of good cheer. I say this, God knows, in no boasting or self-glorying spirit, but in deep gratitude and humility.

In such feelings I know of one eminent minister in Scotland who thoroughly participates—I mean the celebrated Andrew Williamson. This remarkable man I did not personally know till after I had been eight years a clergyman. I had once stepped, when a student, into his church, on a Fast-day. A bungling noodle from the country had preached, and contrived to mangle a glorious text, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" At the close, Williamson stood up, and uttered a prayer of remarkable power. In one simple sentence—a sentence that still clings to my memory—he seemed to say more than had been said in all the sermon—"Thou hast given us thine own Son, and shalt thou not give us bread?" I was struck, too, with his appearance: his dark hair, his retreating forehead, his innocent, almost idiotic mouth, and his swarthy skin pitted with the small-pox, and through which, like stars through midnight, shone two large, mild eyes, as dark as death in their colour, but in their expression as bright as day; a body thin, but strong and wiry; a chest, broad; a figure of the middle size; the whole constituting a unique, in which eccentricity and power, considerable weakness and great strength, simplicity and *pawkiness,* much bile and more brains, had met and mingled.

I cried out to myself, "Strange man this!—among the strangest I ever saw—but the power that can subdue and unify such chaotic materials, must be that of genius." This gentleman had long to struggle against opposition, envy, contempt, and jealousy. He was at one time very generally thought half-mad. He tells himself, with great glee, a story about the rate at which he was held. A traveller from

London had come to the town where he preached, and on the morning of a Sunday had stepped out to the stable-yard of the inn. Meeting the ostler, he said: "I wish to go to church this morning; can you tell me where one of your crack preachers holds forth?" "Crack *what*, Sir?" answered the ostler; "what's your wull?" "Why *crack* preachers, to be sure; you *must* have some *crack* preachers in this large town." "I dinna ken what you mean by a crack preacher, Sir; but if you want to hear a *cracked* one, you have only to step over yonder;" pointing across the road to Williamson's chapel. Williamson, however, persevered, and ultimately triumphed—became one of the most popular preachers and platform men in Scotland; nay, more than once, when he visited London, in spite of his odd manner and strong Scottish accent, electrified Exeter Hall by his inspired common-sense and robust eloquence. He is at the same time one of the most assiduous visitors of the sick in the Church, and has written some vigorous pamphlets on Popery, and one very remarkable volume of sermons.

I once met him in company with Mr. Gilbert, an author of the day, who is also a divine, although chiefly known for some sketches of poets, including Shelley, Keats, and others of that file. This gentleman told a story about Williamson, which he had got from himself, and which was true.[3] (Mr. Williamson is a believer in the personal reign of Christ.) "Mr. W. was sitting one day in his study, when a stranger is announced; and in stalks an elderly man, of majestic presence, mild expression of face, and with long grey hairs floating on his shoulders. He accosts Mr. W.:—'I have long known you, Sir, and highly esteemed your character. You are one of the few ministers in this land who have advocated the ancient hope of the Church—the personal pre-millennial advent of Christ. I, Sir, am Jesus Christ; I am newly arrived from heaven, and you are the first man in Scotland on whom I have called.'" (He was, of course, an escaped lunatic.) Mr. Williamson evidently did not like the somewhat ludicrous

light in which this story presented him to the company, and hastened to say: "That's nothing to a story I have heard of Mr. Gilbert. He was one day sitting in his study, reading 'Sartor Resartus,' when a stranger is shown in, of a very remarkable appearance. His stature is tall, his complexion and hair dark as night; his large eyes gleam with what Milton calls 'black fire;' his forehead is furrowed with deep scars; his air is majestic, but unspeakably melancholy; he has the aspect altogether of a fallen prince. He approaches Mr. G., takes him warmly by the hand, and cries: 'Sir, I am no stranger to your wide catholicity of heart; you are above all clerical and vulgar prejudices; you have done justice, in your writings, to some of my greatest friends, who are now with myself, such as Shelley and Byron. I see in your hand the work of another of my intimates, who is on his road; I have come to thank you in person; I am that much misrepresented person—the Devil!'" My readers may conceive the effect of this rejoinder, given, as it was, with the utmost readiness and rapidity. I record it as a specimen of Williamson's racy genius.

Among ministerial pleasures I must not forget the teaching of the young in classes. I thoroughly agree with the words formerly quoted of a clergyman described in a former chapter: "Oh that class! I sometimes feel as if Heaven were dawning on me there." The minister in his class feels himself perfectly at home; it is taught generally in the evening, when his mind is finely toned, and has not fully subsided from the excitement of the day—the wind is down, but the sea is still running high. He is surrounded by young, ingenuous faces; by souls dawning into intellectual life; and surely the evening star coming out in the yellow west of an autumn evening is not so beautiful as the light of immortal mind beginning to break from a youthful eye: and cold must be his heart, and dead his imagination, if his tongue be not touched with fire. What joys of the purest and highest kind I have had in the evenings of summer, or in those, more delicious

still, when summer is swooning away into the arms of autumn, explaining to artless youth the Pilgrim's Progress, that parable of sanctified genius, worthy almost to be bound up with the parables of celestial wisdom in the Bible, and which, in its combination of subjective thought and objective interest, is so admirably calculated to instruct the understandings, affect the heart, and delight the imagination of the young; and the eyes of those around me burning with emotion—their occasional tears, and their "silence, the best applause"—told that they reciprocated their teacher's feeling, and that the soul of the inspired tinker had entered like a spell into the little room, and melted all of us down into one *menstruum* of wonder and worship. Some of these young persons have retained the impressions made on them in after years—in foreign lands, and on their death-beds. One, the best scholar I ever had, who was cut off by fever while her teacher was dangerously ill with the same terrible disease, during the delirium of her illness, imagined herself in the class to the end, and went straight from hearing what she supposed to be the words of her beloved minister, to hear the words of her still more beloved Saviour. On my recovery, I shed a sincere tear to hear of her premature removal.

I can never speak of classes without remembering one who peculiarly shone, and shines still, in the tuition of the young—I mean George Leitham. This gentleman, and his brother Roderick, I rank among my worthiest and warmest friends. I have often thought that heart and common sense, when united together, become something which, if not genius, is really something better—free, at least, from the penalties of that fatal gift; and nowhere have I found these qualities better blended than in the two brothers I have named. The eldest has a face radiant with open, frank, all-embracing heart; a form buoyant and winged with genial life; his hand, like that of Burns, "threatens to burn yours;" and when he preaches, an ardour seems to "go out of him," and his audience catch the glow. His brother, with more eccentricity, has

nearly equal warmth, and a still stronger intellect. Both are thoroughly unsophisticated, genuine men, and their provincial accent, their unkempt, yet curling locks, their loud, infectious laugh, their brawny forms, and strong stride proclaim them. Antæï—of the "earth, earthy"—whom, in this age of puppyism and pretension, it is most refreshing to meet. George L. is the best teacher of youth, I believe, in the empire. To his congregation is attached a superb Sabbath-school of five hundred scholars, and there the ardent politician, the eloquent preacher, the intrepid opponent of American slavery, and of all other despotisms; the oracle, next to Williamson, of the "young West" of Scotland, may be seen every first day of the week moving through his numerous classes, the spring and centre of the whole complicated and beautiful machine—a child among children—as a child beloved, and yet moving with the dignity of a man, and wielding the authority of a master.

I now close my remarks on ministerial difficulties and pleasures. Ere entering on the subject of my literary experiences, I may premise that I intend, as in the former part of the chapter, not so much to give a regular recital of facts, as to bring forth facts and characters to illustrate certain general deductions. I think it a great and common mistake to enter on a literary life too early, and without counting the cost. The results of this are, if the writer be unsuccessful, a premature souredness of feeling—what Byron calls "a dreary old sort of feeling"—about the unfortunate aspirant; and there are few sights more deplorable than that of a youth of talent and promise, with his early enthusiasm chilled and blackened by frosts of neglect or criticism, to which he has unnecessarily exposed himself. The combination of young ardour and old bitterness is not in nature—it resembles a chaos of fire and ice. If strong and sanguine, this mood passes away from the youth, but it sometimes leaves a permanent evil influence behind it. We can trace this in the career of Byron, who never quite forgot the

Edinburgh Review's attack on his early poems, and something of his ultimate deep disgust at humanity, was owing to the clouding of his first literary hopes. There is a conservative power in the breast and brain of genius, which retains the freshness of all its impressions, whether of bliss or bale, of satisfaction or of disappointment. The poet in the night-season grieves over his earliest griefs, and his brow flushes at the memory of his first triumphs. Hence the embittered boy-bard often remains embittered for evermore. If, on the other hand, he obtains a sudden triumph, the consequences are far more disastrous. Unless possessed of extraordinary good sense, or of a strong and paramount sense of duty, the moment he is assured that he possesses the powers, he begins to take what he calls the privileges, of genius. What these are depends partly upon his temperament and previous circumstances. If he be vain, and fond of self-display, he passes, by rapid stages, into an exquisite and hopeless coxcomb. If he be given to indolence, he falls into luxurious reverie, and fancies himself a Coleridge. If he be sensually inclined, he finds many pits of mischief gaping for their prey. If he dream himself gifted with a peculiar religious mission, he becomes hardened in the conceit that he is to be another Milton. I have seen wild work made thus, partly by the public, and partly by themselves, on young men of very promising genius.

There is a good deal of truth in what Emerson says, that a man may set his own rate, and that the public is profoundly indifferent as to the matter, and takes him at his own admeasurement. But then that admeasurement should be deliberate—not the rash prejudice of a boy in favour of himself, but the result of those watchful observations and comparisons which imply experience. I think, as a general rule, no one should *publish* till he be thirty; for even if he have indited golden thoughts ere then, they can be set and shown to far greater advantage when he has reached the age of manhood. Premature geniuses seldom come to much,

even if they live, and they often die early. It is now held by some eminent physiologists, that a healthy constitution goes on strengthening, both in body and mind, till upwards of fifty. Burns, indeed, said of his first volume of poems, that "it was the first *bairn* of his brain, and would be the best;" but then IT was a very extraordinary production, and perhaps he felt that the expenditure of passion, feeling, and mental force which enabled him to write it, had exhausted and undermined his system; and if he thought so, he was right. A friend of mine published a little work while several years under thirty. A critic, handling it severely, said he should keep his next work nine years. The author indignantly rejoined, that in that case, as the critic was sure to be hanged long before then, he would never read it! He soon afterwards, however, became convinced that the critic was not so far mistaken. A man who collects his thoughts and husbands his breath till thirty, or even five or six years later, and then brings out a first book, combining the unfaded hues of youth with the deeper and maturer colours of manhood, is very generally successful. The greatest literary careers ever run in Britain, such as those of Shakspere, Dryden, Swift, Johnson, Foster, and Sir Walter Scott—careers greatest because in them all we see a steady course of progressive improvement, still impeded by distemper or age—have not been early, but late in their beginnings.

It is an important matter for an author to produce one really good book at the commencement of his career. If written down after doing so, he must be written down by himself; if neglected, it must be his own fault. In general, a good book is a permanent letter of introduction to the world. It may be worth remarking, however, what I mean, first, by a good book; and secondly, by its success. By a good book, then, I mean a book that is a *man's own* in the main—that, along with a display of good or great talents, is original—that proves a mind communicating directly with thoughts and things, with nature and with truth. There are, of course,

many subordinate degrees of goodness in books; there are good compilations, good imitations—books admirably suited to do a certain temporary work, and to fill certain *desiderata* in the public mind. But no book can produce any lasting impression, or gain its author true fame, that is not *intus et in cute*, the product of his own mind. But by the success of such a work, I do not mean a great, far less a rapid sale. The kind of book I mean, seldom lies long as mere lumber on the bookseller's shelves, but as seldom, perhaps, does it run like wild-fire. It disdains being puffed into notice. It reaches, however, its own class—a class sometimes larger, sometimes less—but always enthusiastic in favour of the original book, and grateful to its author. It is a letter bearing the superscription, "To those whom it may concern." It is bread cast upon the waters, and the predestined fisher finds it after many days. Next to its originality, its main *differentia* is its thought-producing power. Indeed, these two qualities are almost one; and one word—the word creative—expresses both. Creative genius means genius never created, and always creating. The kind of book I mean may not run through many editions, and it may be more frequently abused than praised; but if one begins to read it, he will read it through—if he read it once, he will read it again—if he hate it, he will not hide his hatred under a bushel—and if he admire, he will rave about it. Bits of it will be ever and anon flashing on the eye in newspapers; many parts of it will be pilfered by lecturers and writers; a good many, without appreciating it thoroughly, will imitate; and others will admire it too much to seek or dare to copy. Many who know it only by name will regard it with a mysterious veneration, and will transfer a portion of this to the author, who will also, on the strength of this book, receive invitations to lecture, to write in magazines, to give his opinion of volumes, and to lend his aid to young authors, who all commence their letters to him, in sending their MS., with preliminary soft sawder about the "many blissful hours

they have passed in the perusal of his immortal pages:" the same blissful hours being often only those spent in a coffee-room in reading some envious critique, or some still more envious extracts in a London journal. In short, the man's name is made; although whether his fortune too is secured, is a very different question.

Such books are not numerous, amidst the vast mass of publications which pour from the press. I may mention three of this species of native *seminal* works, all of different calibre, none of them popular in the proper sense, yet all in different measures influential, especially on the rising mind of the age—Hazlitt's Works, Landor's "Imaginary Conversations," and Thomas Aird's Poems. The first two of these are not yet, and perhaps never will be, classics; but they are mines where many who abuse are daily diggers. Mr. Aird's poems are not, and probably never will be, popular; nor can they be said to be so rich in thought and imagery as some of the poetic productions of the day; but they are intensely original, bold, manly, and powerful; and, as such, will always hold a high place, and attract an enthusiastic and increasing tribe of admirers.

It is long since old Bentley said that no author was ever written down except by himself; and it holds true still. The sale of his works may, indeed, be hindered, and sometimes his personal comfort disturbed, by systematic attacks; but his *name* will not be affected, nor will his genuine admirers be at all moved from their allegiance. Nay, if the attacks be, as is generally the case, overdone in their malignity, they are sure to provoke a reaction in the author's favour; and, if he have any courage in his constitution, they will only rouse and animate him to greater exertions. I have had my own share of attacks; but the greater part I have never even seen, nor would have heard of, save for some "good-natured friend." Those I have seen, I have felt keenly—for one night; one good sound sleep has made me oblivious of them, or only so remember them as to spur me on in my course. I have

known, indeed, authors exceedingly sensitive, especially when their bread was entirely dependent on their writings, or when their health was bad, or when they were themselves prone to attack others. Baser cowards than your habitual satirists do not exist—mere Ancient Pistols and Captain Culpeppers every one of them—often boobies, always bullies; whether they are assaulted by the broom of a scavenger or by the eye of a man, they tremble and flee. Indifference to assaults is often produced by a thorough knowledge of the system, motives, and characters of those who make them. It is, with a part of the press, an agreed and understood thing, that after an author has risen a certain way, his works are for a season to be undercried. I once asked a literary man why a well-known London print was so severe now on Ruskin; his reply was, "Oh! it's his time; all must take their turn; he was praised enough before; that's our system, you know." I thought it a strange, unprincipled system. Others praise or blame according to the publisher, or the country of the author; others have personal piques and grudges. When you know all this, if you do not excuse the critics, you learn to despise their criticisms. There are sometimes cases, indeed, of especial baseness, which excite deeper emotions than contempt. One of the popular lyric poets of the day sent his volume to a well-known critic, who encouraged—reviewed—praised it. While the poet was, by every post, expressing gratitude, and reciprocating praise—not to speak of pilfering from his writings—*he was all the while writing abusive, anonymous attacks on his reviewer.* This is but one of the worst specimens of the sad want of principle which the literary life leads to in many of those who live by it exclusively. I fear there is not at present an unhealthier, unhappier, or more demoralizing mode of winning one's bread. It is not, however—except in such extreme cases as the above—the men, so much as the position, I blame.

Originally there are few finer fellows than your young men of genius. They begin their career with the most delight-

fully delusive notions of themselves, of life, of nature, and of man. By and by, however, criticism, rejection, experience of the falsehood and insincerity so common in literary life, pecuniary embarrassment, sudden shiftings of position, and a hundred other causes, combine to make them uneasy, restless, dissatisfied, willing to grasp at any employment, and to do any work, on any side, and in any style. Hence the innumerable "portable pens" and literary Swiss abounding at present. Hence there are so many *literateurs*, who can no more afford to keep a creed or conscience than to keep a coach. Hence Whig and Tory editors frequently exchange the writing of each other's leaders; and nothing more common than to find a Conservative editor sinking out of sight for a season, and suddenly reappearing as the Sub of a Radical print.

I may notice here what I cannot consider a very happy sign of the times. I refer to the vast number of young students who now write in periodicals. When I was a divinity student, any one who had written a single paper in a periodical, or even in a newspaper, was stared at as a prodigy. What a change twenty years have produced! Now students in dozens, beneath age, regularly write to, edit, or sub-edit, and gain the most of their subsistence from the periodical press. From this, indeed, advantages, as well as disadvantages, have sprung—greater spirit, freshness, and enthusiasm in contributions, but often, too, greater crudeness and exaggeration. Some clever young men may be bettered by this early initiation into the mysteries of authorship; but far more are ruined, as writers, for life—attain an early triumph, to be sure, but a very cheap one, and one which is apt to lessen instead of increasing with years. Diogenes Dingy, although not known beyond a certain circle, is at present one of the cleverest men in the republic of letters, and one of the most thoroughly damaged by its influences. In the course of twenty years of literary life he has contrived to lose his faith in God, in man, almost in himself, in everything except in a

colossal image of cleverness, which is his real and only deity. He thinks that all men are apes, and that the only distinction worth coveting is that of being a gigantic specimen, an ourang-outang among the tribe. He deems that man's highest destiny is to say the largest amount of clever, wicked, malicious things. He worships Butler's "Hudibras;" reads Swift's filthy Miscellanies, and prefers them even to "Don Juan;" he admires Wilson for his occasional coarseness, and because in his secret heart he thinks him the king of the race Simia, to which he knows *he* himself belongs, and believes him to have been, not a man-mountain, but a monkey-mountain. He believes nothing good, and everything evil of his fellow-authors. Truths, in passing through the atmosphere of his mind, become falsehoods, and lies enlarge and loom like crows through a mist. In the millennium or in heaven he would expire for want of food to his malice, like a reptile in an exhausted receiver. His attacks are fearfully severe; but the *animus* in most of them reduces them to the character of libels on their author. His most formidable attacks are his panegyrics, which are sometimes so overdone that they damage the object, as they are *meant* to do. He never praises one author except for the sake of provoking another. Some of his devilry, however, is affected; he blackens his own face as well as others. He is essentially a coward, and a single touch of the red-hot pitch brings him, squalling, to his senses. His talents are as great as his use of them is lamentable, and you cannot but own that he is a blood-sucker of rare capacity.

Antony E. Will is a man of considerable powers, and, had he known their compass, and kept within it, he might have taken a respectable place in literature. He has the good spirits of a grig, and his mind has the light, wavering, lyric motion of a butterfly. He can indite capital caricatures, and tolerable imitations of great authors. He has written clever adaptations of Bunyan to modern politics, and one or two good imitations of ancient ballad poetry. But in an evil hour

he was smitten with a desire to be a great original genius—a desire in his case as absurd as though he had conceived a passion for the moon. He became connected, through marriage, with a great writer of the age, and from that moment his ruin was sealed. His existence since has been one long spasm of weakness determined to be strong, of clever commonplace striving to be inspired. He has only of late begun to suspect that the effort is vain, that the "gods have not made him poetical." But this, instead of producing humility, has irritated his pride; and he has taken to abusing the grapes which he cannot reach, of baying at the moon because she is so bright and so far above him. He has set himself, in the true spirit of an ape, to rail at and caricature the true men and poets of the age. This he has managed to do with considerable adroitness; but the mean motive has peeped through. Had he had more of Dingy's power, it had been different; but the public soon see the difference between the spite of an emasculate and the malice of a fiend, and while trembling at the latter, they pity or laugh at the former. There is, perhaps, no position on earth more lamentable than that which Will holds—that of an Achilles dipped in the river of inspiration, not all but the heel, but all except the *head*—that of an *almost poet*, and *no man*, if generosity, honour, and heart be elements of manhood.

I regard the early rebuffs which, in the shape of rejected articles, unpublished MSS., &c., meet most young writers, as often, if not always, in their favour—tending to harden and to hammer them out. I have some little experience of it. Besides the rejection of some papers which I mention in the former chapter, I had a volume, on which I had bestowed much pains, and which ultimately was well received by the public, returned twice on my hands—the second time in a sweeping and summary manner, by no means pleasing to literary flesh and blood. I felt for the time as if the solid earth were sinking below me; it seemed not a wound, but a death-blow. I saw there was but one remedy; I repaired to

the summit of a high green hill, where I had often carried my joys and sorrows, and said, "I shall not come down till I am in a better temper of mind;" and there, to be sure, I walked for two hours, "consuming my own smoke," and descended firm, calm, and saying, "I am determined that I shall yet be heard." I remember lodging, when a student, along with a doctor of laws and theology, since very eminent in the world. He had written a paper for the *Edinburgh Review*, and he and I expected great things, in more ways than one, from its insertion. One day, entering the apartment, I saw his countenance fallen. In answer to my inquiry, he went to a drawer, and showed me the unfortunate article, returned with a cold, polite note from Macvey Napier. Down fell all our golden castles in the air; but, on reflection, we both saw it was for the best. He has since repeatedly been invited to adorn the pages of that periodical with his contributions, as well as written for all the other leading Quarterlies.

I think every young man who feels himself prompted by literary ambition, and by the consciousness of genius or power of some kind, should not fritter away his mind in little poems or essays, but should early lay the scheme of a *magnum opus*, and should be constantly thinking of it, gathering matter for it, "lashing at it day and night," dreaming of it. Thus Bailey did with "Festus," and Pollok with "The Course of Time." Such a plan would dignify the very bearing, and glorify the very eye of the student. It would unify all his readings and meditations. I deeply regret that, partly from haste of temperament, and partly from circumstances, and professional labours, I have not been able hitherto to fulfil this ideal myself. Alas! in speaking thus I am speaking not for myself alone, but for almost all the writers of the day. How few loaves, and how many "baskets of fragments," consequently, we find in the literary market!

All literary men should avoid, as much as possible, the

public dinner, the soirée, and the lecture-room. Such scenes, although as fitly adapted, as if *created* for the purpose, to the charlatan, are entirely unsuited to the man of genius. He is almost certain to vulgarize himself by coming down to the level of his audience, if he would gain applause; or, if he seeks to raise them up to his, he frequently fails, and becomes lost in clouds. "*Shoot láigh*" (low), was the advice of an aged to a young minister, meaning that to gain the heart, rather than to amuse the imagination, should be the great aim of a preacher. To instruct the understanding, on the other hand, is the great object of the lecturer; but the misfortune is, that in coming down to effect this, the man of genius often comes down very clumsily. Trying to "shoot laigh," he becomes one of the awkward squad, and reaches neither head nor heart, gives little information to his audience, and administers little delight; and, while failing to instruct the intellect, fails, also, in touching the imagination. It will be said that my views on this subject are tinged by personal disappointment. They are not. I have had my own share of success in lecturing, and, had I persevered, I might have had much more. But I soon felt the falsehood of the lecturer's position, and saw that clap-trap was the only element which was in constant demand. I felt indignant, too, I confess, when I saw the more eminent and gifted members of the lecturing body eclipsed by the masters of sound and fury, —by the dextrous dunces and impudent charlatans of the day. I saw that deservedly popular as the Nicholses, and the Samuel Browns, and the Frederick Douglasses were, they were not so popular as the Thomsons and the Goughs. In my hot youth I was a great admirer of George Thomson, as an orator, and I feel still grateful to him for the delight some of his anti-slavery addresses gave me, although I have considerably modified my judgment of him. In Gough, again, the degradation of the lecturing platform is perfect. I say nothing against the cause he advocates; I impugn not his motives; I believe him to be conscientious and consistent;

but his popularity as a speaker is a blot on the age. His vermicular twistings ("I am a worm, and no man" might be his text,)—"the contortions of the sybil, without the inspiration"—his low mimicries, his jumpings to and fro, the bare-faced plagiarisms in which he indulges, his eternal self-repetitions, the vulgarity and coarseness of the whole display, are simply disgusting, and not only stamp indelible disgrace on his numerous admirers, but do discredit to Mrs. Stowe, who recommended him, ere he came, in language which would have required some qualification if applied to Burke or Cicero. This, of course, took place before that lady had damaged herself, beyond almost the power of another "Uncle Tom" to redeem, by her ("silly?") "Sunny Memories," and the egregious want of common sense, dignity, truth, talent, and every lady-like quality discovered therein, and while the world was still wondering after the *chef d'œuvre* of her genius. Without this *prestige* and patronage, a "dismal universal hiss" would have saluted the twaddling Yankee orator, whom even a Topsy would have despised and laughed at.

Lecturing, I know, will survive my attacks, and a thousand such others. It is too often a nuisance and a mistake, but is peculiarly popular in this age. It makes little deep impression, but it keeps up a small and not unpleasant titillation in the public mind. It suits admirably that class of persons who are anxious to acquire the reputation of knowledge, without the trouble of study. It is an excellent machinery for the creation of smatterers by smatterers. It ranks pretty high in the catalogue of agreeable amusements, and is a good substitute for the card table or the theatre; but as a means of intellectual improvement or moral culture it is of no great value.

I might have said much about the pleasures of authorship. An author as he goes on loses much, indeed, of that delight in composition which he originally had. No more, by and by, can he say, that his writings are—

"Conceived in rapture, and in fire begot."

No more do the hours slip away like moments while he is employed in inscribing his heart on his page. No more is his sleep deliciously disturbed by the continuance of the excitement of composition. No more as a thunder-cloud darkens the air of his study, or as an autumn wind stirs the leaves of the trees without it, does he feel his pen hurrying to record the thoughts which seem shed from the careering elements upon his soul. These joys fade, but they are succeeded by quieter, deeper, and more continuous feelings,—by a greater sense of ease and feeling of mastery. Instead of waiting for the happy hour, and often waiting in vain, he now goes to composition at all times with nearly equal relish, and if he seldom rises so high, he never sinks so low as at first. Composition before was either a luxury or a torment; it is now a regular work and sober pleasure, and he knows the meaning of the words—

"Years that bring the philosophic mind."

More frequently than at first does he stop to watch the progress of his own work, and to adjust its proportions, and if he be somewhat less of the poet, becomes more of the artist. Yet while this is better for him and better for his readers, he misses the wild joy and "first love of his espousals,"[a] and continues to envy himself seated at his humble desk in the east room of his mother's dwelling, now kneeling down in despair in the midst of a sentence that he has begun but cannot finish; and now, when a thought has struck him which seems to form a clue to his labyrinth, running out, ere inscribing it, to the adjacent wood, and spending an hour of solitary gladness, wandering through its silent glades, and gazing at the fragments of the beautiful scenery beyond, which come in like glimpses of glory through the trees. What comparison between the pleasures of fame—though that fame were as great as Shakspere's—and such young joys as most authors feel at first? None whatever.

The pleasure of aiding young aspirants is one of the purest

and most exquisite in the literary life. I have had ample experience in this matter. I cannot enumerate the authors who have applied for advice in reference to their works or MSS., and in scarcely one case have I declined to give it. I lately packed up and returned sixteen MSS. in prose or verse, some of them as large as pulpit Bibles. My experience in this has taught me several lessons. I had no conception before that so many young men and maidens, too, were thinking and writing in a poetical way. The hundreds—I speak literally—of MSS. I have received within the last nine years have come from the most various quarters; from Wales, and from John o' Groat's house; from Liverpool and the heart of the Highlands; from London, Bavaria, and the centre of Australia; they have been the compositions of both sexes, and all occupations, ages, and intellects—shepherds, ploughmen, tailors, tinsmiths, young ladies, old ladies, old gentlemen, wine-merchants, pattern-drawers, cattle-dealers, clergymen, gentlemen of family and fortune, have been included in the list. In my mode of dealing with them my general plan has been this:—I have sought to discover the particular talent that each of my correspondents possessed; if that was not decidedly poetical, I have discouraged them from verse, and pointed out some field more suited for their powers; if they seemed to me to possess any kind or degree of genius, I have said to each, "Perge, puer," but strongly enjoined on them, first, not to use their gift as a crutch, but as a staff; and, secondly, to cultivate it by stern study. If I have erred, it has been, in general, on the side of lenity. Of course, in these MSS. criticisms, I have often laboured under the disadvantage of not knowing the authors personally: if I had, it might and must have modified my judgments, and taught me, if I saw either modesty or vanity, self-love or earnest purpose, predominant, to proportion my praise or blame accordingly. This, I say, often must be the case, and can be so in perfect consistency with candour and truth. You cannot *fully* know a man's writings until you

know himself. Amidst all this mass of poetry, there was, of course, much rubbish; but there was also much that was excellent, and full of promise. A considerable number, perhaps twenty, of those poems which I received in MS. have been printed; and two or three of them, I am proud to say, have become the most popular poems of the day.

Some of these the public, as well as myself, have probably overrated a little; although this was to be expected from the long interregnum in poetry which had taken place. I value these New Poets, however, not merely in themselves,—and I think them men of real genius,—but because they are the promise of better things—the bright morning stars prognosticating the dawning, it may be, of some new and mightier orb of song.

Of patronage I myself had a little, and am grateful to those who bestowed it, some of whom are still my true friends. It was only a little, however; and I soon felt that whatever patronage one has, a man, in the long run, must help himself; and that however sincere it be, it establishes a false relation between the two parties, which often terminates the friendship, especially if the only congeniality between them be common pride. Sometimes the patron becomes jealous of his protégé; sometimes the protégé exclaims—"I am grateful to that man for his kind offices—offices, I am willing to believe, dictated not by vanity, but by kindly feeling—but am I compelled, on that account, to be his humble servant for life, to praise everything he writes; and if I discover any great deterioration in his works or career, to refrain from saying so, provided always that I say it openly, and, if possible, 'more in sorrow than in anger'?" In many cases, the protégé does as much for the patron as the patron had done for him, and then—unless they really are kindred spirits—they often square and close accounts. My readers remember how glad Cleveland, in the "Pirate," was, when he had saved Merton—his saviour's life—and was thus freed from the obligation. So, sometimes, the protégé

feels happy (although I cannot charge my own memory with any such feeling), when he has outpraised the praise of his patron, and is free.

The pleasures of literary composition are accompanied, of course, not only with anxiety but with much labour. I am often asked, with real or affected wonder, how I *can* get through so much work of various kinds? My answer is—Sleep and system. I sleep eight or nine hours out of the twelve, and I never write after dinner or supper. I never have, at any time, written more than five hours a day, and I read at meals and odd moments. At Edinburgh I hurt myself, as I said, by sitting up late to study; and when I obtained a settled position, I said, "I shall throw down my pen every night at nine;" and, with the exception of *three* several times in nineteen years, I have kept the resolution. My present plan of life is this:—I rise at nine A.M.; go into a shower-bath; breakfast and read till half-past ten; write till one, when I dine, walk out, and perform calls, visits to the sick, &c., return to tea at five, write till nine, sup and read till eleven, when I uniformly go to bed. This sort of life, which might appear to some monotonous, is diversified by occasional trips to the country, by the exciting exercises of the Sabbath, by the visits of friends with whom I love to relax myself now and then; and, above all, by intercourse with some favourite little children, relations who visit me each autumn, whose chubby faces, yellow or dark curling locks, laughing eyes, and pleasing prattle, constitute my dearest earthly joy.

I name, in fine, here, intercourse with literary men, and men of genius, as one of the greatest pleasures of a life of letters, especially to one young and unhackneyed. I have in some respects exhausted (as I shall have occasion to mention again) the cream of the early feeling of "hero-worship." Still I linger as I remember the delight with which I used to anticipate, or to enjoy meetings with some celebrated men. I have recorded a few of these in a foregoing part of these

Memoirs; and did space permit, I could expand on this subject. On the whole, I have been pleased, although seldom astonished or overpowered, by the conversation of men of letters. I find light, pleasant gossip the common style of their talk; arguing, dissertation, controversy, or monologue are out of date. To this the principal exception is Carlyle, who, as if from the pressure of some secret pain, pours out perpetually a wild and strange soliloquy, which always compels his auditors to join trembling with their mirth, and from which they depart melancholy and unsatisfied, although deeply interested and struck. He *stirs* every soul and every subject, but *settles* none; nay, seldom casts any real light on any. He leaves a sting behind him always, but it is the sting of death. De Quincey says few memorable things, but keeps up a stream of slow-welling wisdom, tinged now and then by faint but beautiful gleams of imagination, and gently disturbed by little jets of that exquisite humour you find in his works. Talking the other day, for instance, of Cottle, Coleridge's friend, he described him as the "author of *three* epic poems, and a new kind of blacking." His manner is urbanity itself, and you leave him with the impression that he is a good as well as a great man. Leigh Hunt is full of boyish, buoyant spirits, and this in such an old man of sorrow strikes you so much, that you can scarcely note his remarks. You see the champagne bubbling, but forget to count or care for the special drops of its poetic foam. I hope one day to write an "Imaginary Conversation" between him and Professor Wilson, two men that I think never met, but would have loved each other in a minute if they had. Croly is a noble, manly talker, a true Milesian lion in look, speaks with authority, but has not a particle of pomp; is terribly severe in his criticisms, but has a rough kindness in his manner which wins your heart. To use a vulgar expression, "His bark is worse than his bite." He is loth to praise, but when he does, it is with a mixture of discrimination and generosity, which settles the question.

Marston, of the "Patrician's Daughter," is one of the most pleasing men I have met—gentle, high-bred, yet thoroughly unassuming. Bailey, of "Festus," is a delightful person—modest, reserved, yet far from proud; his conversation entirely free from that unhealthy mysticism which sometimes infects his poetry. Thomas Aird and Charles Mackay resemble each other very much in the blended mildness and manhood of their style of manners. Aird's conversation is one of the sweetest and most natural outflows of mind and heart I have ever listened to. Professor Nichol is a rapid, frank, and vivid converser. Mary Howitt struck me as the best combination of the authoress and the woman I ever saw; the two elements blend, as well as meet. Emerson of America is always on his guard—is cold in seeming, and has at times an expression of eye which is profound rather than pleasing, subtle rather than clear; but he slips out now and then searching questions at, rather than ideas of, nature and man. Garrison, of the same country, has a brow like alabaster, an eye of mild and piercing intelligence, and converses with the depth and dignity of a sage. Charles Swain of Manchester has dark hair and eyes, is tall, and looks like a poet. Archibald Alison is cold, still, and silent as an iceberg. Professor Blackie is bold, rattling, fearless, and careless; one who seems always about to sing, and who often does burst out into snatches of German song. He has quite the look of an Italian *improvvisatore*. John Robertson, late of the *Westminster*, and Samuel Brown, are both remarkable conversationists; the one for strength somewhat jagged and abrupt, the other for elasticity, swiftness, elegance, and beauty. Miall, of the *Nonconformist*, is distinguished by the thoughtful shrewdness and earnestness of his talk. Hugh Miller seems in company to be always pursuing some stern continuous train of thought, from which he looks up now and then to throw out remarks which do not seem to come from the depth of his heart, or to interfere with the secret under-current; and whatever he be talking of, his mind is always in the bowels of the earth. On

the whole, however, I never met a man who came up to my idea of a converser, with the breadth, copiousness, and brilliance of Burke or Coleridge. Campbell was smart and sententious; Wilson, affluent and animated, but loose in thought and language; Carlyle, powerful but unpleasing, at least, on the reflection—you cannot long listen with delight to the moan and splashing spray of a cataract; Chalmers was too hurried and ebullient; and De Quincey is too slow and constrained. The age, I suspect, of great talkers is gone, nor have I discerned any germ of coming greatness in *this direction* in our rising men of genius.

As I have had, what is not very common, nearly an equal trial of the clerical and of the literary life, it may be asked what is my comparative estimate of the two? I think then, in the first place, if mere competence, comfort, and quiet be the objects of ambition, neither is very desirable. There are few "high prizes" in either, and the prizes that exist can only be reached after much toil and heart-burning. Clergymen, in Scotland at least, and *littérateurs* in Britain, belong, in general, to what is called the "uneasy class;" they are neither rich nor poor, neither high nor low. What a contrast clergymen present in comfort to farmers, and to many in trade! Speculation (except in wives with fortunes!) is shut against them. They are exposed, besides, to an Argus-eyed scrutiny, and are often harshly condemned, and unjustly suspected. Literary men, on the other hand, while somewhat more their own masters, are far more dependent on the caprices of public taste, and their office is hardly considered, as yet, so reputable. Those, again, who combine the characters of clergyman and *littérateur* have their own special difficulties, and are too often treated as hybrids, and sometimes exposed to two fires. If we look to the two callings from a higher point of view, and in the light of duty, there can be no comparison. A literary man, however faithful he be to his mission, conscious of its dignity, and anxious to perform his work as "ever in his Great Taskmaster's eye,"

cannot be the instrument of so much good, I am persuaded, as the humblest and most hard-worked clergyman or city missionary, who carries the Gospel to the poor and the ignorant, and whose presence is welcomed through a hundred hovels as a messenger of light, comfort, and joy. "This is true fame."

At the same time, the discharge of clerical duty is perfectly consistent with, and ought to be more closely connected with literary accomplishments, and a sympathy with the spirit of the age. If there were more Charles Wolfs, Robert Halls, John Fosters, Thomas Chalmerses, and Thomas Arnolds, there would be fewer Thomas Carlyles and John Sterlings. In my own humble way I have sincerely and conscientiously sought to unite and harmonize literature and the duties of a clergyman; and however imperfectly I may have succeeded, I do not regret the attempt, since I believe it has, in some instances, made my voice be heard with greater deference, first, when I spoke to Christians of the glories of genius and the charms of literature, and far more when I spoke to young lovers of literature, of the superior claims and infinitely higher merits of the Book of God. This has comforted me under many misrepresentations; and should I be still called an Ishmaelite, I lift up the name, and bind it as a crown to me, IF that word simply mean that I belong to no party in the Church, and to no clique or coterie in literature; but not, if it mean that I am an enemy to literature or religion themselves, although, as I shall afterwards show, convictions have grown on me, that science, literature, philosophy, and even our present *forms* of faith, are dwindling and dying away in the dawn of that bright and final revelation of Christ which I expect, like a new sun, to illuminate a desperate world and a distracted Church.

CHAPTER VI.

REMINISCENCES OF SCENERY.

WHO has not marked in his memory, with a white stone, certain days, weeks, scenes, circumstances of peculiar enjoyment, when the heart said, "It is good for me to be here,"—when the earth seemed lifted nearer to the skies—when a softer gold was poured upon the autumn landscape, and a browner glory on the streams and the woods—perhaps hours of intercourse with the objects of passionate love; or single splendid days, standing out, amidst a succession of dark ones, like silver birch-trees diversifying a wood of black firs; or meetings with kindred spirits, when the soul, imprisoned before, burst out, like a Northern river suddenly thawed, and rolled on in power and joy; or evenings of spring or summer-tide, so heavenly fair between the combined charms of sunset and of the great rising moon, that men seemed walking like gods, and women like angels, upon earth—and we thought of "an eve in a sinless world;" or faces of maidens or children that have gleamed on us in the streets, so beautiful as to affect our imaginations and our dreams for ever, though we were to see them no more; or solitary walks along solitary paths, in secret woods, or along barren moors, or

> "Where deeply, darkly, far below,
> Went sounding on a lonely river;"

and when "all power was given us," in meditation, over subjects and realms of thought, strange and unsubdued before; or certain scenes of surpassing beauty, shown in the light of days that seemed created to reveal them in all their glory? Some such recollections I have, in my chequered

life, almost all connected with beautiful natural scenery; and I now proceed to depict a few of those which are dearest to my imagination.

I remember spending one very interesting day, in a peat-moss to the south of Strath-Rennie, on the road to the Lowlands. This was an extensive morass, whither the villagers were wont, in June, to repair, to provide themselves with winter fuel. I determined, in the year 1828, to join a party of this kind, which was leaving the village, to spend one day of veritable toil under a burning sun. I wished a new sensation, and I got it. It was fine to rise at three in the morning, and to see the eastern half of the northern horizon one red line, pointing, like a finger, to the unrisen sun; to hear the earliest notes of birds; to trample on the dewy grass; to admire the calm grey mountains, from which the mists of night had risen, but which the beams of day had not yet touched; to notice, by and by, the "morning spread upon the mountains," peak telegraphing to peak, through a long, lofty, and most rugged range, the fact that the King of glory had entered the sky, to climb a slow-winding road, going up the hill, and from every point of ascent opening up some new aspect of grandeur, beauty, or wildness; to mix in the glee, watch the flirtations, and listen to the stories of the rustic party of lads and lasses, with whom I had mingled; to feel myself, at last, fairly in the moss, and to commence the day's work with the determination to be behind none of my companions in diligence, and to snatch laurels from the very bogs! How I did work for some hours, hurling my wheel-barrow with the wet peats, which the caster (as he was called) had dug out! How delicious, as the sun became hot, to quench our thirst at the large pails of buttermilk and whey which were standing near! How I relieved the labour by discourse with my next neighbour, about Irving's Millennium (he was that summer in Scotland), and amused him by speculating whether this moss would then be made to "blossom as the rose!" How I felt for a while that sense of dignity in

toil which all boys feel, as if to work made them all of a sudden men amongst men! How I enjoyed the meridian rest of half-an-hour, and the repast of oat-cakes, cheese, and milk! How, as the day was descending toward afternoon, I began to tire, to abuse the moss, and to tell my neighbour that if I had a magic-glass, I would burn it at once to ashes! How at last I "recoiled into the wilderness," fairly took flight homewards by a road I made for myself across the moors; and, a little before sunset, reached a dun mountain summit, whence I saw a thousand hill-tops, which seemed like captives in the train of the proud sun, who was shedding on them, as if contemptuously, the last rays of his long day's triumph! What a sense of solitude and sublimity I had, seated alone amidst these wide moorlands—only a few shepherds' huts, a few sheep, and no human being in sight—my only companions the sun and the sun-smitten summits of the everlasting hills! How that high emotion passed away, and I came down subdued and saddened, and reached my home about the same time with Kilmany—

> "When the ingle shone with an eery gleam,
> When the sky was red, and the air was still,
> And the reek of the cot hung over the plain,
> Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane,
> Late, late in the gloaming Kilmany came hame."

And what deep yet rich and dream-haunted slumbers that night were mine!

Two years afterwards, I, in company with a young relation, visited the Trosachs. My friend was a youth of fine taste, accomplishments, almost of genius; and the journey, I trust, lives in his recollection, under the sun and winds of Australia. We went from Glasgow, through Drymen to Aberfoyle, and on the road caught a glimpse of Loch Lomond, with all its isles gleaming in the sun, who was setting behind the dark Alps of Arrochar. Next day, we stretched away westward, by the side of Loch Ard, the lake so exquisitely described in "Rob Roy," and found it the same sheet of rock-surrounded

and birch-shaded silver, as it had appeared in the days of Francis Osbaldistone. Farther up, we came to the solitary Loch Con, alluded to in the "Lady of the Lake,"—

"To scare the herons from Loch Con;"

and although no herons were visible, we were much pleased with it, and the heathy hills around, over which Ben-Lomond just showed his proud forehead. Often since has my fancy travelled to the sweet yet stern stillness of that "very solitary place," Loch Con. Here we struck to the north, and, crossing a steep mountain, came down upon the south-west side of Loch Ketturin. We found a small ferry-house, which was also an inn, with a primitive sign of *slate*, on which were chalked the names of the articles of entertainment to be found therein. A Highland boatman conveyed us across the lake, and we thought of Charon. It was inexpressibly delightful, yet solemn, to be ferried through these fresh curling waves, and toward these unknown romantic shores, while strange blue peaks were staring at us over the top of the nearer hills surrounding the lake. I would give years of common life for the sensations of that one half-hour spent on those charmed evening waters. Arrived on the other side, we passed a place of graves, and felt the awe of death mingling with the beauty of nature in impressing our hearts. It was a quiet grey May evening, in which we entered the gorge of the Trosachs; and we soon felt that this was the very light in which it should be seen. How smoothly the lake slumbered! and the sky, and the rocks, painted on its bosom, seemed but the visions of its repose. There was not a breath of wind to disturb one tress of the young locks of the birch-trees, which grew around in thousands. A mantle of uniform yet lightsome cloud lay over the southern sky, touching, but not concealing, the majestic summit of Benvenue, who leant down his masses of rock and heath over Ellen's isle; while, toward the north-east, a darker hue rested congenially on Ben-An, whose bald brow, scathed sides, and lowering aspect,

were almost startling, as he seemed suddenly to look in upon the lovely scene, like a giant of hell, overseeing from behind some happy earthly company. As we went deeper into the pass, the day darkened into twilight, and night closed over us, when we entered our inn. How sweetly we went to sleep, exclaiming—"We have seen the Trosachs at last!" and what a joyous *réveil* my friend sounded, when, rushing to my bed in the morning, a copy of the "Lady of the Lake" in his hand, he opened the shutters, and showed me Benvenue; quoting, at the same time, Scott's lines:—

> "High on the south, huge Benvenue
> Down to the lake his masses threw,
> Rocks, crags, and mounts confusedly hurl'd,
> The fragments of an earlier world."

All that day we spent seeing the usual sights; the one of which struck us most—no, the word struck is at once too strong and too weak for our purpose—which affected us most, was Loch Achray, that "lonely lake," that metaphor of peace, the very ripples of which are dreams, and

> "The lark's shrill carol from the cloud
> Seems for the scene too gaily loud."

Next day we pursued our journey to Callender, where we were storm-stayed all night, and compelled to prosecute our walk the next morning, though it was Sunday, to the village of Comrie, famous for its earthquakes and romantic scenery. We passed down "Glenartney's hazel shade,"—a fine valley winding amidst copsewood, and beside a roaring mountain-stream, called, I think, the Roughrill; and at an angle of the glen I saw, under a serene, sunless Sabbath light, the fair valley of the Earn, with the white church of Comrie standing as the centre of the scene; a monument to Lord Melville towering above on a grey crag, which surmounts a sea of copsewood; and behind, great round mountains, specked here and there with snow, carrying off the view into remoter wildernesses. There was much in the scene which reminded me of my native and far-distant Strath-Rennie.

I have often spent days of much gratification at the Burn, Kincardineshire, near Montrose. This is a scene comparatively little known, except in its own district; but few places exhibit a finer combination of beauties. Nature has done much for it. It has hollowed out a pass of six miles in length; it has surrounded that pass with heathy hills, and poured through it the North Esk, a rapid mountain stream, which, from the peculiar nature of the rocks through which it flows, assumes the colour generally of dark-purple wine, and, after rain, becomes black as blood mingled with ink. Art, again, has done her part in covering the sides of the pass with the richest and most varied woodlands; in spanning the stream with, here, a bridge of iron-wire, overlooking a cataract, up which you can often see the salmon leaping as if on wings of spray, and, there, with a single arch of stone, which for more than a century has looked calmly down on a boiling gulf of waters; in leading all manner of walks through the scenery; in erecting a fine mansion-house behind, and planting a garden, where dark pines hover over hothouses, and a wall separates a wilderness of wild rasps and brambles from the richest products of the tropics; and in surmounting the whole with a tower of other years, standing lonely, at the very head of the pass, on its lofty crag, and looking down in pensive pride on the gorgeous chaos of hills, woods, crags, and waters, as if it were still all its own. This scene I have seen in all seasons and circumstances. I saw it first as one of a gay party, who had thrown for that day all care to the winds —whose merry and innocent laughter seemed that of fairies amidst the solitudes, and was not materially disturbed even when a thunder-storm drove them within doors for shelter. And I have wandered in it alone in summer, when I was as closely concealed amidst the thick foliage as is a thought amidst the inaccessible and curving ways of the brain; in autumn, when the red heather, the yellow corn, the green leaves, and the purple river, formed an earthly rainbow of colour; and in winter, when moonlight was finding its scarce

resisted road, through the thin, sere foliage, to the unchanged and rejoicing waters. I once heard a man of some talent say of a bridge in Perthshire, that if he were a blackbird, wherever he might wander, he would return and die at the bridge of Strowan. If I, on the other hand, had, even as a man, my choice of a spot to die at, it would be, not excepting my native village, the neighbourhood of the Burn; and were disembodied spirits permitted, in Byron's fine thought, to choose some particular scene for an eternal sanctuary, mine should be found by the side of these dark rolling waters, those shadow-like bridges, and those clustering woods.

But I must hurry on to describe two or three other scenes, which, if not quite so dear to my heart, have equally impressed my imagination. I remember spending, in the society of two or three of the most distinguished men in Scotland, one delightful day at Glammis Castle. This lies in the valley of Strathmore. It is a vast old red tower, surrounded by great trees, which hum in its ears an everlasting hymn of praise, and by rich level meadows. In the interior there is a chapel, filled with a "dim religious light," and painted all round by a fine female hand of some past century, which impressed us all particularly. We were of various creeds—some Dissenters, and some belonging to the Established Church of Scotland, and some, "or I missay," of no church or creed whatever—and yet we had been scarcely a minute in this chapel when I noticed that we had all spontaneously and at once uncovered our heads. The "air became religion, and we bent in solemn worship of the great of old." We saw also the chamber where Malcolm the Second, of Scotland, was murdered. The view from the leads of the Castle we found magnificent, including the long level plain extending from near Perth to the German Ocean—the loch of Forfar to the east—the Seidlaw-hills to the south—and in the north the Grampian ridge, commanded by the huge peak of Schiehallion, which seemed a shoulder of Atlas propping up the sky. It was somewhat terrific to look down over the battle-

ments (particularly to one of the party, a great poet, whose "Hell of Sleep" is produced by dreams of falling over precipices and lofty buildings, and who consequently is, in Solomon's language, "afraid of that which is high"), and to see the dizziness of distance, broken only by the blue-glancing wings and white bosoms of the swallows or martins which were skimming the air below, and recall the words of Shakspere, applied to a castle much farther north—

> "This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
> By his loved mansionry that the heavens' breath
> Smells wooingly here."

It was, I think, that same summer, that I, in company with a little party, visited Loch-na-Gar, that monument to Byron, piled up by the hand of Nature, ages ere she had produced the poet. We had come across from the Spital of Glenshee, in the morning of a fine warm June day; had lunched at Braemar, and hired a guide and two ponies, for the summit of the mountain. The road led us first along the banks of the Dee, which we trod with great enthusiasm, repeating lines originally addressed to the river in Galloway of the same name—

> "Flow on, lovely Dee, flow on, thou sweet river,
> Thy banks' sweetest stream shall be dear to me ever."

After passing the house of Invercauld, and the bold crag Cluny, we struck up through the forest of Ballochbowie, a place which has ever since been my "standard of woodland scenery." What prodigious pines, shedding each a thundercloud of shade from his old pile of foliage! What solemn avenues beneath! What a fierce stream sounds, foams, tears its tortured way through a rocky channel to join the Dee! And how finely does the dark brow of Loch-na-Gar ever and anon look over the glades, as if to remind the traveller that *he* is the goal to which the journey is tending, and that the mighty pines of the forest are only the ornaments of his

footstool! But is he in very deed angry at us? or is it the spirit of Byron that, offended with his worshippers, is now gathering all the mists of the mountain into a black frown? Be this as it may, while plodding up the steep sides, and "larding" with perspiration the heather and the sprinkled snows, we have the mortification to see a thick, and for that evening final mist, slowly preoccupying the ground, and when we reach the summit we can see nothing. Nothing!—it is the grandest spectacle we have yet seen in our life. The mist is not a slow and sullen one—it is alive, and is streaming up in floods, in oceans, upon the breath of a strong wind. Sometimes that wind breaks it in sunder, and then, far down at the foot of precipices hundreds of feet in height, you see masses of snow in the hollows of the hill. Sometimes a sharp beam from the sinking sun cuts the curtain as with a sword, and the valley of the Dee gleams out for one intense instant, and is gone. Turn behind you, and behold! through another momentary breach in the mist, you see, far below, a sullen loch, which reminds you of the "Last Lake of God's wrath" in Aird's transcendent "Devil's Dream." Beside are the silent cairn, a few bushes of cranberries, and a few spots full of the cold unquenchable life of unmelted snow. The spirit of Byron seems nearer still, and yet it excites not terror, but enthusiasm; for from all our voices, hark! there starts simultaneously the immortal song—

> "Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses,
> In you let the minions of luxury rove;
> Restore me the rocks *where the snow-flake reposes*,
> If still ye are sacred to freedom and love."

Whatever the merits of the singing, the effect of the song, struggling with mist and storm, and triumphing over both, was touching to the verge of the sublime. Never, at least, was a sincerer tribute presented on the altar of genius, than was then offered, amidst mist and summer snow, on the dark shrine of Loch-na-Gar. Of the character of Byron, I

am no admirer, nor would I compare him to Shakspere, Milton, Dante, or even Wordsworth, in lofty poetic power; but somehow—and many, I believe, feel the same—I think ten times oftener about him and his poetry than about any of the rest.

The mist now began to thicken and to reinforce itself from the shades of night, and we had to descend. Our guide, as we believe often happens in mists, became confused, and took us down the wrong side of the mountain. When we reached a stream at the foot of the hill, he told us, ere he returned toward Braemar, to follow its course, and it would bring us to the Spital of Glen-Mick, where we could obtain a bed. We followed the stream accordingly for several miles, but no house appeared. We became certain that he had made us lose our way,—no agreeable assurance amidst these lonely tracks. Entirely exhausted, we lay down for half-an-hour's repose. It was a position more romantic than pleasing,—"our lodging on the cold ground," our provisions consumed, the night, although it was the summer solstice, chilly and drizzling, a brawling stream singing our lullaby, and a hundred heathy mountains stretching obscurely around. We soon got up, and pursued our wanderings, our sole guide still the stream, till, at last, about three in the morning, we emerged into an open valley, and were "aware" of a river, a bridge, and a village; but what village, bridge, or river, we knew not. We knocked at one of the houses to ask where we were, and a red-capped head peered out cautiously, and we were informed, in answer to our query, that this was "Crathay-on-the-Dee,"—words which, simple as they were, had then, and have still, a strange wild charm, and their sound seems perfect mountain melody. The place has since become famous through its nearness to Balmoral. There was no inn in Crathay! and, thoroughly tired, we had yet to cross the bridge, and drag our limbs four miles farther down the river, ere we came to a little white-washed way-side *hospitium*, where, by dint of loud and desperate knocking,

we roused the inmates, and obtained entrance, refreshment, and rest.

A few weeks afterwards, I went up from Banff by the banks of the Deveron, to the bridge of Alva,—an enchanting walk through copsewood and crags, and rendered more so by the presence of delightful society. I saw, too, about the same time, the Bullers of Buchan,—which rather disappointed me,—and Slaines Castle, standing right over a rock, which shadows the ocean, and resounding continually with the clang of sea-fowl, and the roar of the waves which have beat on it for centuries, and are still ever renewing the hopeless siege. Dunottar Castle,—that gigantic antiquity, resembling rather a town than a tower, in ruins, and with the memory of the Covenanting sufferers adding a dim immemorial glory to its other charms,—I did not visit till years afterwards. I remember, too, one charming day spent on the river Findhorn. Few days are wholes—most, even of our happy ones, are fragmentary, and full of gaps; but this was a subdued but perfect poem. The sunny, breezy day—the extensive woodlands, newly clothed by the hand of June in their glossiest green—the stream, so pure and so impetuous, like a wayward but innocent child; here, bridled by extempore bridges of wood, and there, overlooked by beetling crags, with fir-trees growing over the gulf (round which to fold our arm, and hang sheer over a descent of 300 feet, was a fearful joy)—the mansion of Relugas, standing apart from the river, amidst its rich lawns and laurels, and suggesting the name of its former proprietor, the gifted and warm-hearted Sir T. D. Lauder, author of the "Wolfe of Badenoch," and that glowing, eloquent book on the "Moray Floods,"—the fine *braes* surmounting the woody margin of the Findhorn, and swelling up behind into bold mountains, and, above all, the heronry on the lower part of the stream, consisting of large old trees, dead below, but above forming nests for these beautiful hybrids between the fish and the bird, hundreds of which, at the clapping of our hands, rose from their nests in

fear and clamour, and flew away, cutting every variety of circle and semicircle with their wings in the air. These features of the scene, along with the society of two respected friends, one of whom may possibly read this narrative in the Southern Hemisphere, served to crown that day and that river-side with "a peculiar diadem."

Peebles, too, Inverleithen, Clovenford, Meigle-hill, Galashiels, Melrose Abbey, and Abbotsford, I have visited, and could tell something new, had I time, about them all. I shall never forget the first time I reached Peebles, running down to the river-side, and lapping a little of its water. Cold-blooded folks may laugh, but that first taste of the Tweed is to me a pleasing memory. I never got the length of "grey Loch Skene," or the Grey Mare's Tail, or St. Mary's Loch; but there is another little lake far north of and less known than these, which has to me a deep interest. This is Loch Lea, in Kincardineshire. The road to it opens up beyond the Burn already described, and conducts us through a winding, unequal, but very interesting glen, which, after exhibiting at its foot many patches of corn, yellowing amidst thick green copsewood and birch-trees, fades and darkens gradually into a stern, woodless, and rocky defile, which emerges on a solitary loch, lying "dern and dreary" amidst silent hills. It is one of those lakes which divides the distance between the loch and the tarn, being two miles in length and one in breadth. The hills, which are stony and savage, sink directly down upon its brink. A house or two are all the dwellings in view. On the west, one bold sword-like summit, Craig Mac Skeldie by name, cuts the air, and relieves the monotony of the other mountains. There is a churchyard at the east end, where lies Ross, the author of the "Fortunate Shepherdess." He was the schoolmaster of the parish, and died at a great age. He was a friend of James Beattie, and one of the best Scottish poets who preceded Burns. A fitting resting-place he has found in that calm rural burying-place, beside "the rude forefathers of the hamlet;" short,

sweet, flower-besprinkled grass covering his dust, the low voice of the lake sounding a few yards from his cold ear, and a simple gravestone uniting with the mountains of his native parish, to form his memorial. "Fortunate Shepherd" shall we call him, to have obtained a grave so intensely characteristic of a Scottish poet! Once, in 1847, while waiting for my party who had climbed Craig Mac Skeldie, when the day had deepened into twilight, and the descending mists made the evening dark almost as night, I plunged into the waters of Loch Lea, which were beginning to swell with the wind, and seldom enjoyed a sensation so exquisitely romantic, as when swimming in the solitary and darkened lake. The celebrated Thomes Guthrie of Edinburgh dearly loves this lake, lives beside it for months at a time, and is often seen rowing his lonely boat in the midst of it, by sunlight and by moonlight too. In coming up the glen, we pass an ancient battle-field, where heaps of grey stones mark the resting-places of the dead. I was still more struck with the opening up of a glen, called Glen Mark, or Murk—"the dark glen." Dark, indeed, it is, and winds up, as if tremblingly, amidst waste and dusky hills,—such a glen as you could conceive a desperate man going up alone, in an October eve, to meet and sell himself to a demon.

I once paid a visit to the braes of Balquhidder. This is a spot seldom visited, even by the thousands who sing the famous song, or who read the novel of "Rob Roy," whose dust slumbers in the churchyard there. I found the place the quietest and most serene spot I had ever seen in the Highlands. It might have suited the resting-place of a poet, rather than of a Highland robber. Wordsworth has glorified the repose of Glenalmain—the narrow glen where Ossian is said to sleep—a glen not far from this spot. But Balquhidder might have been the graveyard of Wordsworth himself, who of all poets most sympathised with nature's solitudes and serenities,— who, as with an ear of fairy fineness, seemed to *hear* a melody in the everlasting silence of

rocks, valleys, and lakes. Balquhidder is one of those nooks or quiet eddies in the stream of the Highlands, which are more interesting to some than the bolder and sterner features of its landscapes. It is a long valley, uniting a succession of little lakes, and surrounded by soft green hills. The churchyard, with the fiery dust of Rob Roy cooled and quieted in one of the sepulchres, seems the centre of the scene, and to breathe out repose upon it all. A little below, a bridge is in sight, standing amidst still meadows, and with still waters and gentle flotillas of foam creeping below. There is but one object in the landscape which threatens to disturb, by adding grandeur to, this scene of perfect beauty. It is the high peak of Ben Voirlich, starting up on the east, at an abrupt, authoritative angle, above a range of inferior summits, and, as we thought, rather jarring on the unity of the prospect, otherwise inimitably rounded in its rest.

To the north of Montrose there is a spot of peculiar and terrible interest, which even yet peasants and school-boys hurry past at eventide. It is an old churchyard, standing on the brink of the sea, which here is beat back by bold crags, and sometimes caught in deep pits. In that churchyard stands a gravestone, which is remarkable for a tragic story. About thirty years ago, there lived in Montrose a lawyer, named George Beattie. He was a wit, a poet, a man of generous heart, and a general favourite. He had gained considerable local fame by a witty poem in imitation of "Tam o' Shanter," entitled "John of Arnha'." He had courted a lady in the neighbourhood of Montrose, who lived on a farm, at a point where the South Esk makes a beautiful bend round a high red scaur, ere it prepares to plunge into the deep. She had favoured his addresses, and the marriage was an understood thing. Unexpectedly, however, an uncle died, and left her a large fortune. Beattie was rather a poor man, and in an evil hour, aspiring to a higher alliance, she suddenly broke up the intimacy, and soon after married another. Beattie straightway formed a resolution to destroy himself, and set

about it with a coolness and concentration of mind almost unparalleled in the annals of suicide. He first arranged his affairs, and made his will. He then sat down, and wrote a long, calm, clear, lawyer-like account of the whole transaction, which is still, and shall always remain, in MS. I have read it, and was astonished at its coolness and firmness. He was in the habit of giving an annual dinner to his more intimate friends; he gave it that year as usual. I know a gentleman who was present, and who assures me that he never saw Beattie more entertaining and delightful. He then walked calmly out to this lone churchyard, laid himself down on a certain spot which he had marked in his will as the spot where he wished to be entombed, and blew out his brains. He was buried according to his desire, and

> "Neptune now doth weep for aye
> O'er his low grave."

This event produced an unparalleled sensation in the district. The deepest sympathy was shown to the unfortunate victim. The lady who had used him so ill was hooted and stoned whenever she entered Montrose, and strange stories were told of her midnights, and eventually of her death-bed. And often still do pilgrims repair northwards to snatch a moral, and to obtain a sublime shudder, from poor Beattie's sea-washed sepulchre.

Not long ago, in one of those sudden longings for a new glimpse of the scenery of my native land, which frequently come over me in the autumn, I took a rapid run to the pass of Killiecrankie. In entering Dunkeld, I was delighted to see the new railway advancing, and thought what a surprise and luxury of prospect it was preparing for strangers from the south, in the sudden burst upon their view when they pass Birnam Hill,—of that delicious little valley surrounding the village,—of Invar—of the Bridge,—the cathedral,—the Tay,—and the magnificent strath to the eastward. The road from Dunkeld to Monlin-Farn is beyond praise, especially as

I saw it, with the ripe corn bathing the holms, and meadows, and the sides of the hills, in gold, and with the afternoon autumn sun pouring its mellowest rays on the river and the woods. Near Pitlochrie, the country becomes barer. West from it, however, as we approached the entrance of the Pass, the woods began to cluster in more richly upon the road, while a great green hill of pines stood up like an island from a sea of woodland on the west. As we entered the Pass, twilight came slowly down, like a stately stage-curtain; and while looking aloft to the two vast mountains on both sides, around to the thick birches and pines, and beneath to the unseen gulf, whence the stream was sending up a choked and tortured cry, we could appreciate a story told us by an old man whom we met,—that when the soldiers of General Mackay, in pursuit of Claverhouse, came to a certain point in the Pass, they recoiled, and said they could go no farther, for this was the mouth of hell. The very road, as it entered the yawning gloom, seemed timid and hushed for fear. A little way farther, we were solaced by the spectacle of a light, sparkling out cheerily from the left side of the valley. It had a most pleasing yet startling effect, as it shone across the abyss, like the first lamp of Heaven appearing to one crossing, Dante-like, from the Mount of Purgatory. Farther on still, the way turns westward towards Blair-Athole. Here we met several persons; and after various inquiries, (some of the worthy natives had never heard of Claverhouse!) we ascertained the field where the stone stands marking the spot where some say that he fell. Our readers must know that it was his tactique to allow the soldiers of Mackay to deploy from the Pass into the level ground to the west, ere he charged them. He drove them back, but was himself shot —some of the people at Killiecrankie say, through a crevice in his mail, as he was stooping near a well, which they point out, to give drink to his horse. This well, however, is remote from the wood behind the corn-field, where the better informed decide him to have fallen. We did not, however, turn

aside to look at the spot where the bloody ruffian met his deserved doom, but pursued our way to Blair-Athole.

Next day we went, ere breakfast, to the Duke's seat, and thence a mile or two up the Tilt. We were disgusted with the long avenue of Rowan trees, leading up to the house. A Rowan tree ought to be a rarity, and stand alone. It is emphatically the *wild* mountain-ash, and a row of Rowan trees is as great an impertinence as a leash of eagles. By the way, there are two magnificent eagles in cages shown here. One especially seemed the very ideal of the king of birds; and his eager eye, quivering talons, broad wings, and proud bearing, combined to say,—"I am not where I ought to be; oh for the summit of Ben-y-Gloe!" I was struck, as I looked at him, and provoked too, by his resemblance to an owl, and thought of the brotherhood of Jerome and Napoleon Buonaparte. Christopher North says, "Every owl is an eagle" (both being of the genus "Falco"); but, alas! on the same principle, every eagle is an owl. While pacing the garden, I asked our old guide if he liked Athole-brose (a compound of milk, honey, and whisky, which the people in this country drink at all hours), and whether it were not an improvement to leave out the whisky. "Na," he answered, "that wad *make it owre saft in the natur!*"

The river, the rocks, and the waterfalls of the Tilt are exquisitely beautiful. I did not remember till afterwards that it was on one of the seats along this stream that Professor Walker describes Burns throwing himself down, in a moonlit autumn eve, and giving himself up to a "tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination." After breakfast we returned back through the Pass, but were persuaded by a fine, genial Englishman we had met, an architect from Pimlico, to take a *détour* from the high road along the side of the river, where he kindly acted as our guide, and showed us all the well-known beauties of the lower Pass,—the waterfall, the deep pool, the high rocks, the stone commemorating the tread of Her Majesty's feet, &c. The day was

beautiful. There had been a slight drizzle in the morning, and this, along with the bright sun and their own uncoined silver, made the birch-trees shine with a sparkling brilliance I cannot describe. I was equally struck with the colour of the river (the Garie), as I had been with that of the Tummell and the Tilt; that is, perfectly *lustrous*, like green marble, from the purity of the streams, and from the slaty and pebbly character of the channels. To these rivers alone, I can fully apply the words of the song—

"Flow on, thou *shining* river!"

Altogether, I was enchanted with this famous Pass. It is not only worth *seeing*, but worth *going* to see, and going to see oftener than once.

I have reserved Glencoe for the last of the little descriptions in this chapter, because (having never seen Loch Coriskin in Skye or Loch Aven in Aberdeenshire, which are probably grander still) I consider it the most awfully magnificent *scene* (I had almost said "being;" its idiosyncrasy is so tremendously distinct, horrent, and peculiar, that you sometimes think of it as alive, with a savage life of its own) my eyes have ever rested on. It is a scene which, strange to say, has seldom been sung, and never adequately, by poet. Wilson has nowhere described it; he calls it only "that dreadful valley of Glencoe." Mrs. Johnstone, in "Clan-Albin," comes near it—the scene of her novel is in the next glen, but she never crosses the ridge. Nor has Scott, if I remember aright, ever pictured it, either in his prose or his poetry.

We entered the valley from the side of Ballahulish; and as we ascended in our car, I amused my companions by reading aloud a description of Glencoe, by Dr. MacCulloch—a description so grossly unlike and so miserably written, that we welcomed every sentence with a peal of laughter. We came to a few cottages situated on a rich green meadow, near which, Talfourd says, "the wild myrtle grows in great profu-

sion," although we did not happen to observe this. Here, meeting a mountaineer, we inquired if he could tell us where the spot of the celebrated massacre of Glencoe was? He replied that "the massa*kray*, he believed, was *held* behind that little spirit-hoose," pointing to a small inn by the way-side—an answer which by no means tended to abate our risible emotions; the idea of a massacre being *held*, like a public meeting, or *soirée*, seemed so ludicrous. Leaving this celebrated spot behind us, we hurried up the banks of the river, to reach the Pass. The name of the stream is Cona—truly the most musical and romantic name that was ever borne by river. In its two simple sounds, the Italian and the Gaelic tongues seem to meet and embrace each other. What famous river—Tiber, Thames, Danube, Ilissus, Rhine, Rhone, Tay, Clyde, Forth, Amazons, &c.—can compare in beauty of sound, aye, or in grandeur of scenery, with the Cona? We cannot forget, too, that the Cona was Ossian's stream, and that to its waters he has lent all the magic of his poetry. The stream itself is in one place wild and brawling, and in another soft and gentle. The first object in the glen that struck us specially was a bold black mountain, rising up on our right, with a deep cut along its side, like the gash which the sword left on the face of Le Balafré in "Quentin Durward." This is called Ossian's Cave, and we fancied the grey-haired and stone-blind bard standing at the mouth, with the "harp of Selma" in his hand, and pouring out his plaintive minstrelsy; the Cona from beneath bearing a burden to his song, and the little lake which lurks below stealthily catching the outline of his majestic shape—third warrior, third poet, third ghost. Something in the rugged aspect of this mountain reminded me of a dissolving view I had seen in London of Mount Sinai, and I called the hill Mount Moses. It seemed a duplicate of that tremendous mount "that might be touched." Further on, the valley widened, and the path rapidly ascended, till we came to a somewhat elevated point, whence the whole broad prospect of the Glen burst upon us.

The valley is not a narrow and confined one, as some of the tourists, who seem to have passed through it *blind*, assert; it is, as Talfourd more truly says, "a huge valley, between mountains of rock, receding from each other till a field of air of several miles' breadth lies between their summits." But these summits, who can describe? Conceive two streets of a city, which had been ruined by an earthquake, or blasted by a storm of fire, suddenly enlarged and exalted into mountains, three or four thousand feet high; or conceive two ranges of mountain-waves, when the sea was at the wildest, arrested and stiffened into eternal granite, and you have some conception of Glencoe; and of the spirit of terrible sport in which Nature seems to have worked while making it. It is a divine ruin. But what sublimity mingles with the desolation! Here hills are piled on hills, as if the Pelion and Ossa scene had been re-enacted in this glen. Here, sharp and dizzy ridges rise; and there, black ravines yawn. Here, two mountains seem to have been torn from each other by one rude grasp; there, several seem to have been melted by fire into one mural precipice; and yonder, behind the jagged foreground of the ruined Glen, stand up some proud peaks, which look as if they had escaped the wave of wrath, which had blasted, twisted, shattered, and torn all around. One of these I called Mount Homer, so serenely did it tower up into the air. While we were in the glen, the sun was warm and bright; and hence our emotions were, on the whole, rather those of rapturous enthusiasm than of deep awe. But it must have been otherwise had a thunder-cloud darkened over the landscape, or a thick mist, or the shadow of a gloomy evening. Then we might have conceived ourselves passing along some great avenue descending toward the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or to have been treading one of the defiles of that "Other Place."* We said that this scene has never been *sung;* and the reason of this seems to be, it has never yet been seen

* This was written ere reading Macaulay's description. He applies to it the very same epithet.

by the eye of a poet fully capable of singing it. Talfourd's descriptions, in the "Fate of the Macdonalds," sink below the grandeur of a theme which would have tasked the powers of a Dante or a Byron to describe. Glencoe would require a poet or a painter who dips

"His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse."

The spirit of a Dante might study here for all eternity, and never want new food for his melancholy muse.

I heard an anecdote corroborating my idea of its transcendent grandeur. An American gentleman travelled from Glasgow, through Loch Lomond, to Fort William. He was an enthusiastic Yankee; and, as he went along, found some scene in his own country to eclipse the Clyde, and Ben-Lomond, and Loch Lomond; in short, every place he passed, till he came to Glencoe. Here he was for a while silent. He was asked, "Anything in America equal to this?" He replied, "No—but it wants the American atmosphere!" Perhaps this was the highest compliment Glencoe ever received.

CHAPTER VII.

PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

PERHAPS some may make a preliminary objection to this chapter; they may say, "You are professionally a divine. And what interest to us the train of sophistry by which you have been able at last to reconcile your heart to your creed, and to find your cage comparatively comfortable?" I suspect the secret spring of this objection is connected with the *kind* of result which I profess to have reached. Were I to confess a transit from orthodoxy to infidelity, I should meet with far more sympathy from the majority of the literary class now-a-days. But, as I am about to describe a fluctuating progress through doubt and darkness, to a modified form of orthodoxy, I must prepare for coldness or hostility from many quarters. I care not! If any of my readers are doubtful of my sincerity, or feel little interest in the procession of my opinions, let them shut the book at this point, and turn to their "Phases" or "Nemesis of Faith" again! If not, let them lend me their ears a little, while I tell them a plain unvarnished tale, with very little indeed of that admixture of fiction, or disguised truth, which the anonymous and fictitious form of this book has compelled me occasionally to employ in the preceding pages.

In childhood I received from my parents very deep impressions of religion, and of high Calvinism to boot. I enjoyed the privilege, too, of witnessing the working of these principles in the lives of two very differently constituted individuals. My father, as I said in the first chapter, was of an ardent, impulsive, excitable temperament, full of

animal spirits, and with very much of the child, and with not a little of the poet. My mother, too, had a dash of romance in her composition; was an enthusiastic lover of nature, delighted in reading such poets as Milton, Thompson, and Cowper, but was, withal, of a quiet and composed character. Nervous in a high measure, she had yet a firm and calm basis, both of constitution and of mind, to support her. I sometimes compared her to one of those stones which an infant's finger can move, but which an earthquake cannot overthrow. I never saw her angry; I never saw her weep, although her feelings were deeply susceptible both of injury and of tenderness. She loved my father warmly, but shed no tears at his death; the grief was within, and the tears those bloody tears which drop in the inner chambers of the heart. A month afterwards her hair became grey, and she looked ten years older than ere the fatal event, which, nevertheless, she survived, retaining all her faculties entire, twenty-eight years.

To a temperament so susceptible yet calm, and a constitution so impressible yet strong, Calvinism came as an appropriate atmosphere. Methodism had been too exciting, and other forms of Christianity too cold. But that mixture of high severe principle and ardent devotion, the one acting and reacting on the other—(the eternal decrees standing like distant snowy Alps above, and the streams from them refreshing and beautifying the warm and sunny valleys of practical Christianity below)—that profound conviction that all is right on God's side, all wrong on man's, and that duty and piety can only be supported by believing in these two cardinal points, implied in Calvinism, became the very life of my mother's soul. Calvinism lifted her up, and lowered her, at the same time. She felt herself nothing—a mere point on the brow of a mountain; but it was a mountain which commanded a view of ocean, earth, and heaven, and she rejoiced at once in her own insignificance, and in the greatness of her God. If some aspects of her religion made her tremble,

she was soon reassured by remembering, "What am I? I am nothing—God is all. I may shake, but the everlasting Rock below me remains the same, and I will rest on his Word and faithfulness." From her earliest years she was a child of God, and walked with the dignity of an heir of the Better Country. While a young and very beautiful girl (surnamed by the people, for her loveliness, her bright sunny complexion, her mild womanly smile, her open features and auburn hair, "the Star of the North"), she used to retire to the churchyard of C——; and there, in sight of one of the most beautiful prospects in Scotland — the green vale of Strath-Rennie winding up amid rich lawns, deep groves, and wooded braes, to where the blue Grampians interfere with the calm current, and abruptly and as if in anger transmute the beauty into grandeur—she spent many a solitary hour in singing aloud psalms to God, or in reading religious books or poems. Afterwards her religion assumed a quieter, yet at the same time, deeper aspect; and after living a long, useful, and serene, although chequered and anxious life, she fell at last asleep in Jesus, eighty-two years of age, and presenting, on her dying-bed, a more powerful argument for Christianity than a thousand elaborate treatises could express.

The influence of the same creed I have already, in part, described upon my father. To him, however, as I suspect to *most men* of true man-like qualities, it came more as a sudden stranger from above, than as a quiet spirit contemporaneous with the dawn of his own reason. Not but what he, too, had had deep religious impressions in boyhood; but the religious impressions of boys, even when of genius, are too often like the morning-cloud and the early dew. Those of girls are less precarious, and need less the aid of the "wind that bloweth where it listeth," *visibly*, at least, to renew and perpetuate them. But he had in youth somewhat lost the savour of his early piety,—while she retained all hers; and yet the effects of the same creed on such different temperaments, when both had attained full age, were in many points, not in

all, identical. It made them both humble, hopeful in God, doubtful of themselves and of man. Both loved the Bible as they loved each other, with an affection lawful and unlimited, and both loved nature with a *tendresse*, of which both felt rather ashamed. But while the larger, wider nature of the one found the straitest form of our religion, if a chain, one that went with him in his somewhat wide intellectual motions; the other loved it the more that it linked her for ever to one sacred spot—the blood-soaked turf below the cross of Calvary. The one felt God to be with him, while reading, in diversified regions of prose and poetry, because his own conscience and heart approved of the exercise, and deductions drawn, if not of the books read; the other thought that a double portion of the Divine Spirit was to be derived from Heaven by waiting and brooding over the pages of Scripture, and Scripture alone, with the exception of that class of books which may be called variations of the Bible. Both were right in different ways; or, at least, on both the different regimen operated in producing different degrees of spiritual excellence—in the one, a more manly, and, in the other, a more feminine variety of the "beauties" of the same "holiness."

All this I saw with a boy's eye, and a boy's eye is not the least clear; its mirror is a mere calotype, indeed, at the time, but retains its impressions, and the mind, comparing them with after-thoughts, comes to the true conclusion. A boy's eye often sees prophetic visions of the characters on whom it rests. I had religion presented to me first in an imaginative light, through the means of a hieroglyphic Bible, in which all the leading facts of the Holy Book are accompanied by pictures, as well as in the pictured pages of the "Pilgrim's Progress." Yet, on the whole, the faith I learned came on me rather as a shadow from this sublime and dreadful universe and its Author, than as a sunbeam, shooting life, peace, and reconciliation athwart it. I heard more of God as a consuming fire, than as Love. I heard more of hell than of heaven. I was taught to tremble at human nature; to fear, as much

as to love the Sabbath; to look on literature as utterly profane and worthless, unless consecrated to Christianity; to weep at my mother's knee, while my father was describing eternal torments; to look at all things, even at the Gospel itself, through a saddened medium; nor am I prepared yet to say that this dark side is not as nearly an approximation to the truth as is the bright. But to the imagination of a boy it did not appear so. Hence, while springing through the flowery meadows, or basking beneath the shade of the large summer trees, or listening to the ripple of the three rivers of my native vale, or walking on a Sabbath morning to a tent-preaching under the glorious sun of July, I sometimes felt a difficulty in reconciling all this superfluous life, loveliness, and apparent bliss, with the existence of a Divine Wrath that demanded such myriads of victims, and with the other dogmas of the Calvinistic creed. I remember, too, boggling at the doctrines of Election and Grace, and greatly annoying one of my relatives by asserting, one fine Sabbath afternoon after church time, the Arminian hypothesis. While I saw the good effects produced by Calvinism on my parents and other friends, I could not avoid observing that on many it seemed to exert a very different influence. I saw that with some it degenerated into a gloomy superstition; that with some it was a mere hollow cant; that others held it in unrighteousness, in conjunction with not a few bad habits, and base passions and practices; that some seemed shrunk up and shrivelled through its power into narrow and nauseous mummies instead of men; and that in others it nourished a fierce and almost Popish bigotry. I know now that only, if I may use the expression, a Calvinism very badly calcined could be chargeable with such results; but I did not see this *then*. I had, moreover, a good deal of that distaste to religion which is often found in the heart of the young; to whom it seems an alien in the world, and who like it less, and not more, because it is. Yet my enthusiasm for the Bible, the "Pilgrim's Progress," my father's preaching, and even, in a certain sense,

for religion, was strong; and when I met anything in Scott's novels, or other literary works, that honoured or seemed to assert evangelical sentiments, my blood glowed, and my face flushed as if I had received personal praise. I remember, while reading Virgil's Æneid, how delighted I was to find Æneas called *pius* Æneas, till a good old minister who was assisting my father, explained, to my enlightenment and mortification, that the epithet only referred to the hero's filial piety. Such was then, to use Burns' expression, my "idiot piety;" ardent, but fluctuating and uncertain.

In common sermons, I found, at that early time, little to fan the flame of devotion; and sometimes, instead of listening to the minister preaching on a sacramental evening in the church, I employed myself in watching and wondering at the process by which the tallow in the candles was transmuted into flame! Elphinston and my father alone charmed me; the one by the oddity of his delivery, and the fine sparks of poetry which leaped at times out of his mouth, and my father by his anecdotes, and the earnestness of his eye and manner. The death of this venerable parent produced a profound impression on my mind in a religious point of view. For some time the world seemed to recede; it was blotted out, and I thought of eternity alone. I could read no books that were not religious; and Halyburton's* "Memoirs," with the account it contains of his triumphant death-bed, became my constant companion. In this, however, there was more of fear than of love; and I shall never forget the start and perspiration of terror with which, walking a week after my father's death from the village to the manse, on a dark night, I saw a flash of sheet-lightning "painting hell on the sky." A little after, a worse feeling arose; a kind of semi-sensual luxury in reading religious books and indulging religious sentiments. How long this might have lasted, or what mischief it might have done, I cannot tell; but my first College session,

* "Halyburton;" a celebrated Covenanting Divine, still much esteemed in Scotland.

by plunging me in new cares and new studies, and introducing me to new companions, chased this feeling away, and most thankful I am that it did. I got, however, thus a glimpse of what I am persuaded is a very prevalent and a very pernicious form of false piety; a piety of *feeling* which, when pampered, tends to loosen the bonds of virtue, to relax the nerves of action, and to make religion little else than a secret and pleasant vice. I have known, in after-life, young men and women greatly injured by the indulgence of such sentimental pietism; in some cases driven mad, in others made melancholy, relaxed, and torpid, and in others led to tamper with hidden sins, which, combining with the dissolution of their hearts in the element of weak and superstitious religion, have completed the ruin of their bodies and souls. Never were words more true than those used somewhere by Dr. Croly, that "our religion is a *manly* religion." That false sentimental form of it to which I allude, a form greatly aided by the writings of even good men like Samuel Rutherford and Mac Cheyne, is often productive in its votaries of such evils as diseased self-esteem, self-search and self-consciousness, hypocrisy, cant, senseless bigotry, and an indulgence of the emotional part of religion to the detriment of the health both of their mind and their morals.

In the summer, I think it was, which succeeded my second session at College, I felt for a month or two an overwhelming sense of the shortness of life, and the rapidity with which my time was gliding away. The thought of death, according to De Quincey, is always most terrific in summer-tide, and it was during a long succession of bright and shining days, that this feeling was strongest in my mind. Every new morning of splendour dawned sadly on me, because it was never to dawn again; and every evening, I knew, had brought me a stage nearer to the last evening of all. On these brilliant days, as on the rounds of a celestial ladder, I felt *descending* to the grave. The feeling was morbid, and did not deserve to last long; nor did it outlive the autumn. I believe it is not

uncommon with those young persons who possess a susceptible and poetic spirit; and I find it recorded of poor Cowper that, in early life, he was haunted by a similar thought, as by the shadow of a demon follower. On me it left little impression of any kind.

Ere I went to the Logic Class, and still more while there, I began to be beset with the question: "Is Christianity, after all, true?" And I went into the inquiry with all the ardour of an eager and impassioned temperament; went to it, however, with all my feelings, prejudices, and prepossessions, in favour of Christianity. I had no reason to wish it false. I was consciously guilty at that time of no sin, whether of soul or body; and yet dark intellectual doubts began to perplex my spirit. They were of various kinds. Sometimes I fancied I perceived discrepancies in the Scriptural narratives; sometimes I doubted of the divinity of Christ, or of eternal torments, or of the doctrine of the Trinity—doubts which, by undermining my belief in the prominent doctrines of the Bible, shook by and by, to some extent, my belief in the Bible itself. I felt that I could not reconcile Christianity to nature, to man, to philosophy and science, to literature and poetry. I did not then see that Christianity is a fact as real and far grander than any of these others, and that instead of needing to beg a reconciliation with them, they rather require to come and seek a baptism and a blessing from it. But in my early worship of nature and of literature, I did only partial justice to Christianity's claims; nor, indeed, did I comprehend accurately what these claims were. And yet at times I remember the thought passing across my mind in an irresistible intuition, *Christianity must be true:* and I listened to this as to a voice from heaven. At other times, when my perplexities returned, I fell on my knees, and prayed to God to show me the truth, and to rid me of those spectral doubts which waylaid me. Under the teaching of James Milne, it was not at all likely that I should derive much satisfaction to my disquietudes; and indeed all that session I was, although

not an infidel, yet in a sceptical state of mind. I saw, along with B. G., that the external evidences were not demonstrative, and I had not then learned to feel the force of the internal. I almost entirely lost my piety. I lost all delight in prayer, although I still practised it as a form. I became a listless hearer of sermons, and felt little else than contempt for the preachers I did hear; contrasting their platitudes with the burning glories of the style of Shelley, Godwin, and my other literary idols. I began, along with B. G., to doubt the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, and to do away with the main pillar of its support—the infinite evil of sin. This I saw to be a logical fallacy; but did not see to be at the same time a melancholy fact. All metaphysical principles would prove it to be impossible; every conscience knows it to be true. But my conscience at this time was asleep, and was confirmed in its slumbers by the fact that my life was blameless. I found even a delight and luxury in doubt, and read no books with such relish as those mentioned above, and the works of Brockden Brown; all of which are shadowed by a sublime scepticism, amidst which I loved to walk, as if in the cool grand glooms of a primeval forest. I felt, too, a species of distinction in my sceptical notions, which, although I dared not avow them, yet gave me a secret sense of superiority to the Christian students and others with whom I mingled.

With such ideas I felt excessively reluctant to enter on the study of divinity, to which my friends had destined me, and contrived to put off my going to the academy at M——, for a year. If I had secured much literary reputation at College, or been thought worthy of the notice of any of those "flatterers" who often waylay promising youths and lead them into paths of secular ambition; or if I had had any smallest competence; or if I had had the slightest aptitude for business, I should have stopped short of a theological career. But I was miserably poor. I was, in all matters of business, a blind blunderer. The little reputation I got at the Logic Class of Glasgow, and at the Moral Philosophy Class of Edinburgh,

had not extended far. I had heard, too, a great deal of the precariousness of the literary man's life; and I felt, therefore, that I must become either a wreck or a minister. My delay of a year was so far fortunate, that it gave me some months in my native place, ere I went to the Academy. There, the society of my good mother and other friends, much solitary communion with the great surrounding forms of nature, and, above all, the study of the Scriptures in the original (I read the Greek Testament through several times, and about one-half of the Hebrew Bible), united to renew my religious impressions; and during my first session at the Academy, I became, or fancied I became, very devout. I prayed much and fervently. I spent much time in my closet, and in reading books of practical piety. I continued, indeed, to enjoy literary works, and thus saved myself from that morbid fanaticism to which I had been exposed in a former period of my life; but I subordinated all my readings to the study of the Bible. During the succeeding winter, I began a course of theological reading; and, among many other bulky tomes, perused all Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History." It was curious that nothing in that book interested me so much as the chapters appropriated to the *heresies* of the various centuries. I cared very little for the account of persecutions, celebrated saints, and so forth; but whenever I came to the historian's record of the opinions of the Gnostics, Mystics, and other heretics of the early ages, I felt my heart beating, and my keenest curiosity excited. During the same winter, I was greatly fascinated with the prospect of a Millennium—not in the form in which I now believe it, as connected with the Personal Pre-millennial Advent, but in the form in which it is credited by the majority of Christians. I loved the thought, for its consoling character, for its sublimity and its poetry, and indited a long essay on the subject—full of enthusiasm, at any rate. During the succeeding summer,—one of a bright and breezy, not a hot and sultry character,—which I spent in Strath-Rennie, my mind was in fine tune. I began to entertain the

ambition of being a popular public speaker, and commenced the practice of declaiming aloud on religious subjects, sometimes to myself, in my own chamber, or in the "engulfed navel" of woods, and sometimes to one or two companions whom I prevailed on to accompany me in my rambles. I found again in these declamations, or soliloquies, the old liberty and rapture I had had three years before, in my solitary and inaudible meditations. The difference was, that now chiefly sacred topics engaged my thoughts. Often, too, lying on my midnight couch (in a little room, the sole furniture of which was a bed, a chair, the meal-barrel of the family, an old box full of pamphlets, and the sole light of which came from a small sky-window), I spent hours together in composing sermons and prayers aloud. I wrote, too, various compositions of a religious or moral kind, but with considerable difficulty; and although my pen now moves far more fluently than my tongue, it was otherwise in these years. Again and again I had to break off compositions in the middle, and shed more than one flood of tears over the unfinished manuscript. In all this there was, I fear, more of ambition and of the ardour of eighteen, than of piety. Still, my doubts had for a season entirely disappeared. On a visit to a city at some little distance from my native vale, I met, this autumn, the "Natural History of Enthusiasm;" and the delight with which it struck me not only confirmed me in that luxuriant style to which I had been all along prone, but made me aware of a form of religion more ideal and impassioned, more sanguine and sunny—more tropical, in short, than I had found in the gloomy pages of Foster, in the divine prattle of Addison, or in the glaring rhetoric and fiery logic of Chalmers. For the first time, I found, as I thought, evangelical truth wedded to Oriental fancy; the sentiments of the New Testament delivered in language resembling that of the Old. This completed the imaginative intoxication of that delightful summer. I had formerly loved Christianity with the heart—I now loved it (too exclusively, I fear) with

the imagination; and my exercises in the Academy bore testimony to the exceeding exaltation of my emotions on all the grander and more poetical topics connected with the system.

A year or two after, in Edinburgh, came that dark hour described in the former chapter, and with my misery came many of my old doubts. Especially did I begin to feel again the awful horror of the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. I remember once weeping, like to break my very heart, in the meadows, one beautiful spring afternoon, as I thought of the dire doom awaiting the majority of the species; almost blaspheming God, as I looked up through my tears, and asked, "Why hast thou made all men in vain?" and how soothed and sublimated I was, when walking, an hour or two after, on Waterloo Bridge, I heard from some concert-room a strain of music ascending, consisting of many female voices, united in a harmony which seemed that of heaven; and how it brought tenderer tears than before to my eyes. I became aware, and mentioned it to one of my friends, of a dark process going on in my mind, which, I said, would issue either in my becoming a confirmed infidel, or a confirmed Christian, or utterly careless on the subject of religion. Partly to confirm myself in my staggering faith, partly to record my own struggles, I commenced a book entitled "The Infidel," consisting of essays on the "Causes and Cure, &c., of Infidelity;" and which was to be attended by a religious novel, developing the same thoughts in a fictitious form. These projects, however, were never completed. Yet, still my mind continued tossing in deep uncertainty. I shall never forget once setting out on a walk from Glasgow to Stirling, while returning from M—— to Strath-Rennie. I reached a little bridge about half-way, and rested there. While sitting on the ledge, and gazing at the golden September sky, a little collier-boy of eight staggered past drunk and blaspheming; and the shocking thought of such a spectacle of early degradation—probably, too, the prelude of a whole after-life of similar sin—being

presented in the universe of a great and good God, came like a strong sickness over my heart, and I had to stifle the wicked question, "Is He so good and so great, after all?" It was, I am persuaded, a suggestion of the Evil One; but it could never even have entered, perhaps, a mind which was not partially poisoned with doubts and perplexities. Some days after, crossing a wide moorland, I lost my way among the bogs; and whether it was that the memory of that boy at the bridge was still fresh, I cannot tell, but among these dreary moors, over which the mists of night were beginning to drop, I felt, for an hour or two, as if I had become the "vessel of an infernal will;" and a torrent of the darkest and most tremendous thoughts rushed, like an arm of Acheron, over my shivering soul. I thought of some of Bunyan's experiences in the "Grace Abounding," and of Christian hearing the whisper of fiends in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and being tempted to confound them with the utterances of his own spirit and voice.

This journey to my native vale, as usual, refreshed and revived, as well as calmed and soothed me, and I returned to Edinburgh in a much happier frame. After varied vicissitudes of feeling, I took licence, at length, with considerable firmness of conviction; and for several years, and while actively engaged in pastoral labours, had almost forgotten what it was to doubt. At this time a keen theological controversy began to shake some of the religious denominations in Scotland. Although I took no public part, I took a deep interest in it; and a contemplation of the bad spirit, the fierce diatribes, the wretched partyisms, the rancorous personalities, the *odium theologicum*, and, as it seemed to me, the miserably shallow and one-sided views of Christianity displayed by *all* parties in the various churches where it raged, disgusted me beyond measure. So also had the still more celebrated contest which culminated in the formation of the Free Church, at every stage of its progress, and in *all* the parties, more or less, too, which were in it engaged. I said,

"What do these quarrelling divines mean, tearing out each other's eyes, like angry parrots in a narrow cage? Do they not see that whilst they are disputing about their Atonement *per se*, and not *per se*, their Veto Act, and their Strathbogie and Auchterarder cases, that the common foe is opening his boa-constrictor mouth to devour them all?—that infidelity, having donned another skin—that of Pan—'the leopard-skin bedropped with stars'—is approaching to the contest? While they are fighting with one another, let me look more narrowly to this fell destroyer in his new and splendid dress." And I did look to him accordingly; and alas! while looking, was once or twice nearly engulfed in his jaws.

Various other circumstances contributed at this time to make my mind morbid and unhappy. I found, I thought—perhaps unjustly—little sympathy from many of my fathers and brethren, either in my public labours or in my literary tastes. I had my own sufficient share of pastoral difficulties at that time. Perhaps, in some instances, I was misled in my estimate of the magnitude of these two different classes of calamities, by men who had an object in view. But I *did* feel a dreary sense of isolation, and fancied that in the writings of some Pantheistic authors, I found something that gave me more a feeling of intellectual companionship than in the theological productions of the time. Walking through "the valley of the shadow," I heard their voices in distant parts of the glen, uplifted, as I fancied, not in blasphemy, but in melancholy prayer. I knew that they were in deep doubt, but I did not as yet suspect the depth of their *animosity* to the Christian faith. I admired, too, as I still do, their writings for their eloquence, insight into many things, enthusiasm, and poetry.

There was one event in my domestic history at this time which cast a deep shadow on my soul, and weakened me for the contest with my spiritual foes. This was the death of a dear little girl of nine, who was connected with me, and whom I regarded as a daughter. I am guilty of no conscious

exaggeration when I call my Agnes all that Mrs. Stowe has since represented in Eva—one of the rarest specimens of the workmanship of Heaven. In her simple yet profound nature, was united a wisdom beyond her years to the most bewitching artlessness. Playful yet serious; quick in feeling; buoyant in spirits; fond of books and of solitude to a degree which is rarely to be found in one so utterly a child; affectionate and open-hearted, she wielded a gentle fascination which was felt beyond her own little circle, and attested by the tears which the news of her loss drew from many to whom she was but partially known. Her face was one of those which, without being perfectly regular in their beauty, win their way still more beseechingly to the heart. Its leading characters were transparent openness—every feature obeying the motions of the mind within, promptly and fully as the wave receives the sunbeam; great flexibility and intelligence of expression; and that indescribable something which *naïveté* and heart unite in stamping on the countenance. Her brow was prominent, pale as marble, and nobly expanded; her eyes—

> "Oh! speak not of her eyes—they were
> Twin mirrors of the Scottish summer heaven;"

her chin Grecian, as if chiselled by Phidias; her cheek, in exercise or emotion, often flushing up through its paleness into a rich and roseate hue; her voice clear, sweet, none the less for its Norland accent, and predicting a beautiful singer; and her step light, airy, and swift as a "roe or a young hart upon the mountains." Disease—it was severe hooping-cough—changed her countenance, ere it sent her away, spreading a fearful pallor over the whole, protruding the fine eye into a stare of anguish, and choking up the music of her voice, which, inarticulate, became unable to express her thickening thoughts and wants; but death restored her to herself, and almost all her former beauty clustered round her corpse. Death is often a ghastly disguise, a dread mask, reminding you of an ill-executed picture. But *she* was so

calmly beautiful, so spiritually still, so smilingly radiant amidst her marble coldness, that but for the heart-heard whisper—how stilly low!—"It is for ever," and the shudder springing from the touch of the icy brow, you would have said, "The maid is not dead; she only sleepeth." Death seemed forced to smile out the news of immortality from her dear cold countenance. It was solemn beyond expression to see friend after friend coming in on tiptoe, raising the covering, looking and leaning over the face, and with sighs or tears, or aspect of withered unweeping woe, turning away. It was inexpressibly touching, too, to see the immediate relatives taking their last look ere the lid of the coffin was closed, amid bursting sobs, and all the other irrepressible signs of sorrow—suddenly brought under the sense of an eternal separation; one parent the while looking not—daring not to look—but patting the dear brown head once more, and hurrying away. In a sweet southerly side of the beautiful kirk-yard of F——, beside the bones of her grandfather, under the clear blue sky of the north, and in the expectation of the coming to this sunlit vale of tears of Jesus Christ with his holy angels, repose, and have for thirteen years reposed, the remains of one who never gave a pang to a friend's heart, nor armed with a rod a father's hand; whose memory shall be cherished, and her sweetest name repeated, and the spot where lies her virgin dust visited and watered with tears, while there lives one of those who really knew her, or felt how insipid in comparison was all love beside what *she* inspired—of one who in the brief business of her existence exhibited the affection of the amiable child, the ardour of the docile scholar, the liveliness of the fearless girl, and the graces of the saint sanctified from the womb. She was my playfellow when cheerful, my comforter when sad; her artless yet piercing prattle at once soothed and roused my mind; and assuredly, amid all the "chambers of my imagery," I have never had an idol like her, whose premature loss I continue bitterly, yet submissively, to deplore.

Not so submissive were my feelings at the time. How my heart bled, and what dark, unhappy thoughts crossed my soul, as I saw this good and beautiful young being writhing in anguish, and weeping with her fearful pain, till there came at last a mild and merciful delirium, and gave her partial forgetfulness! The theory of all suffering springing from sin, seemed to fade into extinction beside Agnes' dying bed. Scarcely less strange were my emotions as I leaned over her coffin, and cried out, "*That* is beautiful, but it is not my Agnes." I remember, too, when the preparations on the morning of the funeral were going on, lifting up an old volume, which lay on the window-sill of the chamber where the dear child was lying, and glancing at a paper on the "Origin of Evil." How revoltingly false and contemptibly silly all the theories which were there recounted for the explication of that surpassing problem, appeared in the light which a March sun was shedding into the chamber of death! Even when I tried to say to myself, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," a

> "Wicked whisper came and made
> My heart as dry as dust."

And it was not till I saw the child I loved so dearly fairly committed to the grave, and had leant a long time in anguish over a tombstone which was casting its shadow on the little spot, and, looking up to the sun shining so bright and cold in the spring sky, had said within myself, as Scott cried at the burial of one of his friends, "There shall be less sunshine for me henceforth," that tears came to my relief, and a rainbow of resignation, if not of hope, seemed to smile through these bitter yet blessed tears.

And yet my word at the grave's edge had been prophetic. There was for some time less sunshine in my sky. The summer that succeeded, was the most miserable I had yet spent in this world. The shadow of those thoughts which had passed through my mind at her death and funeral, continued, like a gigantic ghost, to hover between me and my

God. I lost the sense of his Fatherhood, and began to enthrone a Fate, which, if I could not love, I could not blame, in his stead. And yet, most inconsistently, against that Fate, too, I warred; and against it, even, at times, I murmured. I remember visiting, in the course of the summer, the secluded but beautiful region surrounding the grave of my darling. At one point, two or three miles to the west of the village of F——, there is a solitary tree, marking the divergence of two roads; the one of which strikes across moors and bogs to the house where she was born and where she died, while the other bears away westward through beautiful woodlands. I had been wandering all forenoon through these mosses, till at last I felt disposed to rest. The day was hot, and I took refuge amidst the thick umbrage of the tree, where I spent an hour of the most poignant misery, the most thoroughly rounded despair, the most misanthropical and God-accusing anguish, that I ever experienced. I often yet, as I walk below that tree, look up with shuddering horror, and with deep thankfulness that such moods have passed away. I have noticed my companions wonder at the earnest regards they have seen me fix on an object which to them had no interest. They saw only a tree; I saw what had been an hour's hell, and which shall remain, while life and it endure, a landmark of memory, and a spring of gratitude. Undoubtedly, although I seemed in perfect health, and was performing with energy every duty, there must have been something wrong in my bodily system, as well as in my views. The summer was one of burning heat, and I looked forward to the autumn, as likely to bring me healthier and happier emotions.

I always loved autumn above all the seasons, for its "joy of harvest," and its joy of grief; for the many sad and sombre glories which gather around it. The spring reminded me of Homer and his lusty song; the summer of the fervid writers and bards of the East; and the autumn of Ossian and his poetry. But this autumn brought little "joy on its dark

brown wings" to me. I had occasion, in reference to a *publication* I produced in it, to learn a good deal more about the contemptible narrowness and watchful bigotry of thoroughly sectarian Christians, and to feel how difficult it was for an honest inquirer to act harmoniously with them. My deepest doubts I did not express; I preferred that, like the fox the bowels of that Spartan boy, they should rend me in secret; besides, they were *doubts*, not convictions, and I abhor the man who circulates his doubts, even to relieve himself, and far more for the purpose of perplexing others. But on certain minor points, I had formed somewhat decided opinions, and my expression of these led to a good deal of vexatious persecution; chiefly, indeed, from the silly and ignorant, but partly, also, from the envious and malicious, which, if it failed to injure me outwardly, did my boiling and struggling *soul* no good.

It was in this deep crisis of my spiritual being, with fears within and fightings without; my love to my profession and to Christ continuing strong on the one hand—my doubts, on the other, as to many of the primal doctrines of both revealed and natural religion, gaining force every day—that I had sent me from the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, a copy of "Sartor Resartus." Two years before I had read the "French Revolution," by the same author, with rapture. It kept me from sleep—it haunted me during my waking hours. I quoted it in the pulpit, and I read its best passages over and over again to strangers. I was prepared, therefore, for welcoming any other production of his, although it had had no reference to my present state of mind. But I had scarcely glanced over twenty pages, till I cried out: "This is the very book for me! Nay, this Sartor is an *alias* of myself." As I read on, the feeling strengthened: "I, like him, have been in the Everlasting No. I have been frozen for a period in the Centre of Indifference; I am seeking, at least, for the Everlasting Yea." I found, indeed, a coincidence between these three predicaments, and the trilemma to which, in a former page,

I said I fancied myself at one time driving; namely, to religion, or atheism, or utter indifference. In the wild tumultous language employed by this man, while in the Everlasting No, I recognised fragments of the fearful thoughts that had streamed through my own mind, in the bogs of Sheriffmuir, and in the tree beside the solitary road at Inch. Hence the book turned up my soul like a storm.

> "It fann'd my cheek, it raised my hair,
> Like a meadow-gale in spring;
> It mingled strangely with my fears,
> Yet it felt like a welcoming."

Beside its eloquence and terrible poetry of earnestness, what struck me most about it, as distinguishing it from other sceptical works, such as those of Shelley and Byron, was its apparent *reverence* for God and Christ. I did not see then, that this reverence could not long be sustained, after the author had struck away its foundations in denying the personality of God, and by implication, at least, the divinity of Christ. "*A mouse's weight,*" said Tony Foster to Varney, about the trap-door in Kenilworth, from which he had removed the props, "*will bring it down;*" and I now know that Sartor, and most of his followers, have trode down the door, and tumbled into the gulf. I was deceived, too, by his seeming satisfaction with the "Everlasting Yea;" and for a time imagined that it was real, yea, the only peace in the world. Peace did not, indeed, immediately visit *my* breast, but surely it must be in his who had said, "'Blessedness is better than happiness, as much as happiness is better than pleasure," and in that of his maturer disciples. I will not expose the abundant evidence I have had since, to doubt whether this conclusion were correct.

And now what was there to save me from the same abyss of ease?—the ease reached by Amy Robsart when she was crushed, at the bottom of the trap, out of the very shape of humanity! Reader! it was principally one thing (next, of course, to Divine Grace, if I dare lay claim to such a

gift); it was a personal passion for, and an unlimited, undoubting belief in Jesus Christ himself. In my deepest and darkest hours, I clung to the doctrine of the God-Man, the Word incarnate in the Man of Galilee; nay, methought his beautiful, bending, compassionate form became larger and brighter from the surrounding gloom; and I was tempted to cry, "If there be no other God, Thou, Jesus, at least art divine; and to whom can I go but unto Thee, for Thou hast the words of everlasting life." And to intensify this affection, there arose in my heart at this time, like a new star bursting on the midnight, the ancient Hope of the Church —that "blessed Hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." I had previously despised this as a dream, and wondered, with a great admiration, how a man like Edward Irving ever yielded his giant arms to such gossamer chains. One night, however, in my absence, a humble millennarian missionary called at my dwelling, and left with my dearest relative some little tracts on the subject. These, on my return, I read, sooth to say, with no great admiration, and with no credence; but they turned my attention to the topic, besides convincing one good and pious inmate of my dwelling. I began to revolve the subject in my mind, and the result, at last, was a very decided hope in the Pre-millennial Advent. "One clear star the seaman saves," and for a long time I had only this star in my cloud-drifting sky. Unable to answer many of the objections or objurgations of Carlyle and Emerson, I said to myself, "*He* shall one day answer them." Unable to see clearly the relations of reconcilement between science, literature, philosophy, and religion, I cried, "He shall one day form the bright synthesis between these transcendent things." My faltering Faith began to lean for support upon her younger and fairer sister Hope.

One day, while wrapped in deep and silent misery, I was relieved by a friend sitting in the room beside me, murmuring to herself in soliloquy "The Saviour *is coming soon.*"

I felt as if an oracle had opened its lips beside me; and although twelve years have elapsed, and he is not yet here, I am as confident as ever that as surely "as Tabor is among the mountains and Carmel by the sea, so HE shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." Connecting this hope with my early Millennial expectations, I found them far grander and more conceivable—at once more true-like and more poetical. The doctrine of Christ coming to burn the earth, and judge those who, at death, had been judged already, seemed now uninteresting compared to that of the Son of Man descending in the crisis of the world to deliver his saints, and to introduce a new and better era in the annals of time. I began to feel that this was the chief hope of the distracted earth. I saw clearly that no form of philosophy or science could long satisfy the mind or heart of humanity. I felt that the present shapes of Christianity were sustained in life partly by galvanic action and effort. There was no prospect of a new Cultus arising; and as to the worship of the universe, it was as old as Paganism, and what good had it ever done to mortal man? But here was a thought, suggested by Christianity itself, of a new and final evolution of its power, which was to explain its mysteries, strengthen its weak points, give it a glorious incarnation on earth in Universal Man, and bring its structure to a golden spire-like point. This commended itself to my imagination, as well as reason; "detained me before the Lord," shed new life and fire into my flagging ministrations, and was often a secret solace to my own sick and weary heart.

To say that I was now satisfied or at rest, were to say too much. I was yet far—very far—from being so. Restored now to belief, or, at least, to hope, I was still subject to the reactions of doubt and despondency. I was still tormented with a desire for unity, and was perpetually seeking to reconcile the creeds or crotchets of the Carlyle school with Millennial Christianity. I remember one April night, as a soft large moon was shining into my midnight room, crying

out, "I must and shall reconcile the theory of Emerson with the religion of Jesus." And for a year or two this was the effort of my mind, and, in some measure, of my writings. But I felt it, at last, to be vain and hopeless, and have resigned it for ever. Shortly after this, I entered the arena as an author, and met with gratifying success. This I attribute partly to what some of the critics called my "criminal lenity" to the sceptical writers whom I had occasion to analyse. And I am ready to admit that, were I speaking of some of these authors now, I would use language of a very different kind. I have no right and no wish to interfere with private convictions. I have even sympathy with the insane earnestness of a Shelley, running to and fro with his wild Eureka of despair; but when I find writers in cold blood decrying Christianity, and denouncing all who still believe it as weak and cowardly, and yet having nothing but the vaguest dreams or blackest negations to substitute for it—these authors knowing, too, that Christianity is making its votaries, on the whole, virtuous and happy, while their systems are keeping *them* miserable, and precipitating their followers into gulfs of varied mischief,—I grant that I feel now inclined to call them by their right names.

I had occasion, after this, to meet a good deal with this class of men in private, and to hear a great deal more of them from others. And I saw much about them that was pleasing. I found them men of high talent, genius, varied learning, and, on the whole, of manly manners. But I found also certain elements which did not improve my conception of their creeds. I found in almost all of them,—as, indeed, I might have expected—a morbid restlessness of spirit, disguised sometimes under levity, and sometimes under wild and ghastly laughter. They were *not* at peace within themselves, or satisfied that their course was a clear and correct one. I found, too, in some of them, an eagerness to find out faults in the lives of Christians, or to suspect them of bad motives, or to smell out secret scepticism in their hearts, or

"to exaggerate the feeble and false elements which are working in the Church. Over such things they scarcely even affected to mourn, while some of them openly rejoiced and loudly laughed. Real Christianity, they said, had died with Irving and Chalmers, and all the rest now were either silly or shams. I observed, too, the working of pride and vanity in open and glaring forms. Their God, next to Nature, was Intellect or Genius, especially their own; and with what haughty contempt, or worse, haughty pity, they looked down upon humble, poor, uneducated people, even when they had worth, honesty, and religion! I have even heard some of them *defend* this feeling as the proper one! Pride, I noticed, distinguished those of them who had the highest talents or genius,—a fierce, demoniac pride, spurning their foes, and recalcitrating at everything that pretended to be a Revelation from God. In others—of a feebler, but more elegant and graceful make—there was a butterfly vanity, which it was almost pleasing, if it had not been somewhat ludicrous, to behold. Common to both were critical fastidiousness and wholesale detraction of all who did not talk a certain mystical jargon in literature, and had not the same sceptical Shibboleth.

Some who were among, but hardly of, these men, I loved, and love still, for their truly generous and amiable dispositions. They are such men as Jesus, in the days of his flesh, would have sighed over, and declared to be not "very far from the kingdom of Heaven." These were anxious, but unable to believe. Others, again, displayed a very different spirit. They hugged their dark chains; they were not afraid to "speak evil of dignities," aye, of Christ and the Holy Ghost themselves; and yet, along with serpentine ferocity, there was a serpentine cunning blended, and their eyes, when turned upon you in certain moods, seemed, now the eyes of a chained tiger, and now those of a basilisk. *This* is not the language of fancy; at least, I could prove that it is not the language of *my* fancy alone, since some of this very school have owned

to me that they had the same impression about their leaders. There was a third class, far more despicable, who had the art to conceal sentiments, in certain companies, which they proclaimed in others, and who became actually the pets of some religious bodies, and objects of encomium to some religious newspapers, through the power of vague mystification or of dexterous reticence.

In saying all this, I am not guilty of betraying any confidence,—as no confidence was ever reposed in me, and as I only repeat emphatically and honestly what is known by many. I am far from meaning to deny that I have witnessed much that was evil, mean, narrow-minded, disingenuous, and Jesuitical, in the ministers and members of the Christian Church. I *know* the deep-rooted envy, the jealousy, the hypocrisy, the ignorance, the vulgar pride, the underhand methods, the Mammon-worship, the "flunkeyism," in ten thousand forms, which coexist with a Christian profession in the lives of multitudes, and I have felt the effects of some of them, to my own cost. But I know, too, that these spring, not from the presence, but from the absence of the true spirit of Christ. Whereas, not only do the evils I have observed or heard of among the infidel school, equal those of professing Christians,—if not in number, in intensity,—but they can be *traced* directly to that creed which denies a future world, the existence of a Divine Saviour, the reality of sin, and the responsibility of man. The bad and hollow members of the Christian Church,' I may compare to dark spots swimming in a bright sun; the good and true men of the sceptical schools, I liken to white spots upon one of those black luminaries, which some astronomers tell us are found in the remoter parts of the universe.

Even in the better members of this class, I perceived two or three grand errors; one was a Brahminical worship of the mere forms of Matter—a worship that often far outshot the lawful homage paid these by genius. As they had no object of worship but the Universe, they considered it necessary to

make the best of their idol. Not content with asserting its excessive beauty and grandeur, and the bracing healthful influences that communion with it exerts on both body and soul, they magnified it as a religious teacher; they winked at those tremendous symptoms of *something wrong* which are found in it as well as in man; and they sought for a Code of Morals and a System of Belief in its "divine meanings," as they mystically called them. The stars were the true Urim and Thummim upon the breast of God; the voices of Nature, of the old thunder, the old earthquake, the crashing avalanche, the roaring deep, the soft westerly breeze, and the ripple of a summer stream, with its tiny and momentary stars of light, were the true and only utterances of the Unseen I AM. In vain to point out to them the unsatisfactory and contradictory nature of these deliverances; still they were divine, and all that Divinity could do for us, I viewed and view Nature chiefly as a poetical thing, they regarded it as a God, and the only God; I felt to it much as Pascal describes himself, when he says, "*The eternal silence of these infinite spaces affrights me,*" even while it was stirring up my soul to wonder and enthusiastic admiration; they believed it, and sung of it, now in eloquent prose, and now in harmonious verse, "as their Mother and Divine." I looked upon it as, with all its magnitude, only a drop in God's bucket, and not to be compared in value to a single soul,—as something that had begun to be, that was limited in its being, and that was yet to cease to be; they regarded it as infinite and eternal, and man's soul as a mere bubble upon its boundless, unutterable deep. I owned the tremendous difficulties connected with the material universe, the sufferings of myriads of innocent creatures, and the indifference with which it seems to regard individual happiness or individual life; but I said, "I know that it cannot reveal the Father, whom I have found in Christ; I know the utmost it can stammer out from all its starry lips is only 'God *hath* love,' but not 'God *is* Love.'" I trust in other revelations than that dumb and half-choked utterance of Nature, and

am not "careful to answer to objections urged against it;" they, on the other hand, knowing of no other discovery of God than the Universe, professing infinite belief in it, and not admitting the doctrines of a Devil, a Fall of Man, a glorious Supernatural Millennium, or a Future World of compensation and explanation, were driven to their wits' end in accounting for evils of which they could not believe either the beginning or the end, and have sometimes even gone the length of pretending that the sufferings of the lower animals, for instance, were only apparent. And yet some of these very men, who, in order to explain the dreadful phenomena of things, had to resort to silly sophistry, were most forward to charge the Bible God, and the Bible heroes, with cruelty. I need not, however, enlarge on this, as Henry Rogers has shown, with overwhelming force, not only that the moral difficulties which cling to revelation affect Nature-worship and Deism far more formidably, but that the Scriptural discoveries form the only bulwark to save us either from absolute Atheism or from the Manichean hypothesis. We must believe either in No-God; or in Two Co-eternal Powers, the one Good and the other Evil; or in the Scripture doctrine of a *Finite* "Enemy," afterwards to be "bound," having "done this," *i.e.* produced, in conjunction with depraved man, all the moral, and perhaps, too, all the physical, evil in the world.

I noticed, too, in this class of men, a morbid craving for Unity. This is one of the *rages* of this age. In science, poetry, art, and philosophy, there must be organic unity. Now, whatever be the case in these, (and we think that a great deal of nonsense has been spoken on the subject, particularly in reference to works of art,) I am certain that the formation of a proper theory of God has been retarded; or, speaking more strictly, that the Scriptural view of the moral and religious relations of the universe has been perverted, by this diseased desire for unity—a unity, which, like the water from the gate at Bethlehem, after which David thirsted, has sometimes been fetched from afar; and, like it, has returned dyed

with blood—the blood of murdered Truth! Hence the sad tampering and tinkering that has taken place with notorious facts, and established principles. Hence that mysterious distinction in the Godhead, found in a crude shape in all primeval faiths, and which, in the Bible, takes the perfect form of the Trinity, is denied by so many of our modern theorists. Hence the doctrine of a Devil, also found in various forms in all aboriginal creeds, and which, in the Scripture, is separated from the Manichean mistake about his equality with the Divine Being, is now "pulled down," as Carlyle says; and many maintain that the Devil is only an *alias* of God, who might have said, as appropriately as he, "Evil, be thou my Good." Hence, sin, too, is just holiness gone a-mumming in a dark mask. Hence, hatred is just love in disguise, and malignity a modification of kindness. I wonder they do not, on the same ground, maintain that madness is reason; folly, sense; murder, conception; and death, birth. Nay, that terrible thing, death, from which men have been accustomed to shrink, shuddering back with a horror compounded of natural and moral aversion, as a hideous anomaly in the universe, is regarded by these amiable and profound thinkers as a blessing, and as rather a beautiful object. The "corpse adds a solemn ornament to the house;" the coffin, although not, as we Christians foolishly think, the chrysalis-cocoon of an immortal, is an interesting piece of dark furniture; and the grave, if never to be opened, covers its blank and black forgetfulness with grasses and flowers! God said of the world, ere man fell, "It is very good;" they, more generous and catholic in their tastes, say of it still—with all its miseries, absurdities, and vices; with its burning cradles and crushed worms, its mad-houses and lazar-houses, its hollow laughter and real tears, its slaveries, and—(we were going to say, its superstitions; but no! *there* their charity fails them)—"It is very good!" And why? Because these are all found on one earth, which attends one sun, is attended by one moon, and belongs to one universe!—although they might as well

say of a palace, which had been shaken by an earthquake, and become for years the haunt of robbers and unclean birds, that the remains of tapestry and mirrors, the odd leaves of books, the scattered coins, the cracks in the wall and roof, the spiders' webs, and the filthy ordures, were all right, and all showed the same author, *because* the palace had been built by one architect, enclosed in one wall, and had had one great window, letting in light through the roof! Here indeed, however, there is a divergence in the path of our speculators. Carlyle, with Goethe, maintains that evil is twin-born with good, and, like it, eternal; asking, "How can you escape from your own shadow?" Emerson, deeming this doctrine not very hopeful or comfortable, opines, (although he thinks evil not a bad thing either, and generally productive of much good,) that it is through some mysterious process of "pushing," on the part of love, to come to a quasi end, departing, however, as unexplained as when it entered. Of the two, I think Carlyle the more consistent. If the All—to use his own favourite word—has bred all these strange and terrible things by a necessity of its own nature, then why should it not breed them always? What can it do better? If these things are, in a very considerable sense, good, why should they not continue? We may, indeed, conceive of "better," but may not the positive degree of "good" be quite enough for us? *We*, on the other hand, holding that many of these things are detestably evil, thoroughly unjust, irredeemably polluted and malignant, and that as long as they continue, they are libels on the Divine character, are certain, alike from our own instincts and the testimony of Scripture, that they are to cease for ever. Let our Carlyles and Carlyle-worshippers hear this from the mouth of that Seer of Patmos, who saw the end from the beginning, and let their petty talk about evil being man's shadow, "night perpetually following day," be crushed under the words—"And there shall *be no curse*, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And *there shall be no night*

there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." Be it that this is the language of poetry; no language could have expressed the great idea save the language of poetry. And within the woof of figure we see the broad principle, that evil and misery are to have an end, at least on earth; although an eloquent and warm-hearted writer of this school says, "In vain have dreamers promised that in this life strife shall one day cease. No! Strife without end below!" John then, perhaps, was a dreamer, when he said, "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is with men*, and he will dwell among them, and they shall be his people, and *God himself* shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be *any more pain*; for the former things are passed away." *This* shall be the true unity, for I, too, am a believer in unity—the unity which God Himself is yet to produce, by "binding," through his Son, the Evil Power; by swallowing up death in victory, and by establishing a universal empire on earth of purity, love, and peace. But the unity of our modern speculators is false; it lies in a vain effort to identify good with evil, light with darkness, bitter with sweet, and sweet with bitter; and exposes them to the prophetic "Wo" pronounced on those who make the insane and blasphemous attempt. (See Isaiah v. 20.)

That "Wo" I saw to be *hopelessness*. I am by no means a sanguine person, and but for my belief in the future of Christianity, would often surrender myself to despair. If I err in this, I err in company with such men as Milton, plaining out his musical protest against "evil days," "evil tongues," and "Satan's perverted world;"—as Pascal, tossing on his bed of slow fire;—as Johnson, crying, "O sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams!"—as Burke, dying, as he says himself, "an unhappy man;"—as Foster, all his long lifetime

"subject to bondage;"—as Henry Rogers, breathing a milder inspiration of the same dark melancholy which lay on Pascal: I err with Irving, and with Coleridge;—with Hall, "on whose soul" Foster saw "a deep shade of gloom always hanging;"—and, I add, with Carlyle, who, in his rejection of Christ, reminds me of the Genie imprisoned in the iron pot, who for the first hundred years of his confinement vowed to reward the man who should liberate him, but during the second, *swore a tremendous oath that he would put his deliverer to death*. But *some* of these men were relieved amidst their dark views by the hopes of Christianity; and so, I flatter myself, am I. But what have our modern sceptics to cheer them? Some, indeed, of their number smack their lips over this world, and affect to regard it as a very snug and comfortable little corner of the universe. What with good digestion, cold bathing, a well-managed and modified voluptuousness, exercise, light-reading, museums and theatres—no Sabbath in their week, and, thank God! no immortal soul in their bodies, to trouble them about its future fate—they contrive to make, they think, the best of this world, and have considerable sympathy, on the one hand, with the ancient Epicureans, who said, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" and, on the other, strange to tell! with some enlightened and excellent Christians, who have set themselves elaborately to show how a believer may beat an infidel hollow in the *enjoyment* of the good things of this life—how he may, in his flight to the better country, "spoil the Egyptians" *en passant*, and ride triumphantly in a first-class carriage to heaven!

But leaving the Secularists of the party to their flesh-pots, I return to the question—Can their leaders, can the true men and poets among them, be happy or hopeful? Being without God, can they be with hope in the world? Can they be entirely satisfied with the gratifications of sublimated swine? Can they stoop over the same trough, and grunt in chorus over the same husks with their followers?

Can they be happy even in the full enjoyment of the innocent and refined pleasures of this life, believing that they are to go down like bubbles in the dark stream of death? No! they cannot—they do not; they are—they must be—miserable. They talk of the Puritans, and, while abusing their creed, wonder at their energy of purpose, their vigour of character, their great achievements—not seeing that the two springs of all this lay in the faith and hope ministered by Christianity—in the faith that Christ had come, and in the hope that He was to come again. They talk of an "Atheistic age"—centuries of Atheistic government; and they try to help this state of things by sapping that Christianity which was the life and glory of what they justly deem the proudest section of English story! They tell us to *wait* and *labour*; but wait for what? labour in what hope or prospect? None. It is but sowing the wind, to reap the whirlwind. *We* are ready to labour, and to wait, too; but we labour and wait under divine hopes, golden promises—the prospect, if we endure to the end, of an immortal and unfading crown, "reserved not for us only, but for all that love Christ's appearing."

I noticed egregious inconsistency in some of their number. At one time they professed thorough satisfaction with this world, in order to save them from the necessity of believing in another; at another, they magnified its evils, in order to shake the argument for the being of its God. Some, again, referred the solution of the problem to the future; saying, "Hitherto the history of this earth has been a fearful farce; but we hope for better things." "What ground," I might have rejoined, "have you for hoping this, except from the promises of Christianity? And what better things can you expect from one who, according to *you*, is the *sole* author of this farce? What, indeed, can you expect as the result but a tragedy—*the* tragedy—the utter annihilation of the souls of men? If God has been the only and complacent conductor of this fearful farce, it is just as likely that he will

carry it on for ever, as that he will bring it to a close." These thinkers seemed to look upon God, merely as an artist, poet, or dramatist, who might be allowed to bungle, nod, or walk through his part, during the first two or three acts or books, provided he gave us a splendid *denouement* or conclusion, of which, hitherto, however, they had to admit, there was little prospect. Others have gone farther lengths than even this. The Rev. James Smith, a man of great talent and vast scholarship, has written an elaborate and ingenious work, entitled "The Divine Drama of History and Civilization," in which he formally claims for God all the abominable delusions of Greek Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery, and so forth, and lays them down, as children more legitimate than Christianity herself, at the door of Heaven! All systems, however erroneous or depraved, are so many distinct "missions" from the one Divine Being. This gentleman is at great pains to prove that there is no Devil—lest, we presume, he should be suspected of having had this most monstrous of all latitudinarian theories whispered in his clerical ear by one who was a "liar from the beginning." The same notion, I may remark—a notion so essentially blasphemous, that rather than believe it, I would drink a thrice-drugged cup of spiritual poison from the hand of Hobbes or Spinoza themselves—runs through and contaminates the whole structure of that otherwise glorious poem "Festus."

The inconsistency to which I have alluded taints this school in various other directions. Scarcely two of them have the same theory of Christ; scarcely two of them have the same way of explaining away the force of the Christian evidences; scarcely two of them are agreed as to what *cultus*, or whether any, is to succeed Christianity. All of them are agreed, indeed, in thinking Christianity not what Christians believe it to be; but here, again, there are wide disagreements—some thinking it the best of God's many "missions," and others about the worst; some raving about it being the "divinest idea" of God, except, perhaps, Maho-

metanism; others hating it with a hatred so intense, that they would almost recal the "exploded myth" of hell for its special accommodation; while others love it so much that they assume its name, and steal the clothes of its phraseology. Mr. Rogers' picture of a "sceptics' dinner-party" is very accurate.

In one other point they are, speaking generally, at one. I refer to their aversion to church-going and to clergymen. As to church-going, it seems to them the most lamentable piece of superannuated folly. "*They* kneel with old women, or poor and pious weavers, who cannot rid themselves of the belief that 'there is a wrath to come;' or listen to formal cant, doled out by snivelling curates, pampered rectors, gaunt Presbyterian parsons—Independents, with swelling piles of white neckcloth, and mouthing volubility of talk—or even by Unitarian ministers, with the word 'Truth' inscribed on their watch-seals—no, not they! They will rather to the woods and the silent fields; or will, on that day, of all others, record in writing their liberal and unfettered thoughts. What can *they* learn at church?" Why, perhaps they might learn a good deal. They might listen to the sweet and beautiful prayers of the old English liturgy, and have an opportunity of comparing them with those of Leigh Hunt's Prayer-book. They might hear the organ lifting up its billows of sound, and mount on them, as on ridges of gradual ascension—Alps above Alps—firmaments above firmaments—toward the very throne of God. They might, in Scotland, listen to the "simple song of praise," the voice of psalms, and might, while it lasted, dream that they were boys and Christians once more, and weep as they awoke from the dream. They might even still hear some solid truth, set in rich and sparkling eloquence, from lips nearly as gifted as their own. They might, if thirsting for earnestness, find not a little of it among the old, the invalid, the females, the children, and the simple-hearted in every congregation. If, on the other hand, they wished to refresh the fury of their

hatred at formalism, cant, hypocrisy, and fashionable religion—should they feel it becoming rather *fade* and stale, they could not do better than step into certain churches in both the metropolis of England and in that of Scotland. But, in real truth, I fear these men are detained from church partly by the morbid fastidiousness which characterizes their literary taste, partly by a bitter hatred at the religion which is proclaimed there, and partly by caprice, a love of singularity, and downright affectation. Some of them could not consent to be silent, to listen, and be overcrowed by a clergyman, during the space of an hour, for a whole world. It never occurs to them that to worship is as much a part of divine service as to listen, and that they might bear with the *bore* of the one for the sake of the lofty spiritual enjoyment that, were they really devout, they might derive from the exercise of the other. But no; their gorge rises at the bare conception of a poor parson venturing to echo the thunder-message of Sinai, or the soft accents of Calvary, in the ears of a man of genius!

As to the clergy, we have seen recently a specimen from the Polyphemus of the sceptical party, of the animosity entertained to these "black dragoons." If John Sterling had only been eight months a whipper of female slaves, or eight months in Jericho, or eight months in Pandemonium, instead of being eight months a humble, working curate! "*That* was the unkindest cut of all." To run wounded, although not killed, by Carlylean cannon-shot, and spend eight months of this mutilated life in telling the glad tidings of the Gospel to poor cottagers—what a crime! fitly rewarded, when he returned, by another salute, which *did*, at last, effectually cripple and bring down the mark! Honour to the brave hand that fired the great guns, and completed the destruction of the unfortunate invalid, who had committed the inexpiable sin of believing in Christianity, of working in the Lord's vineyard almost one year, and, as Coleridge, too, had once done, of preaching Christ with the lips and the

heart of a man of genius! 'Now, that the clergy of any denomination are all they ought to be, or that they thoroughly comprehend their time or their work in it,—I am far from maintaining. But this I say, that they are employed in conserving an influence which will be granted by all to have *once* been beneficial,—that the religion they teach is still, as John Sterling admits, intensely adapted and eminently useful to simple minds,—that they are doing a good work among the young, among the poor and the "forgotten," —that they are the natural bulwarks of the institution of the Sabbath, ("a day which," says Emerson, "is the Jubilee of the whole world, and, as it dawns into prisons and hovels, suggests, even to the vile, a sense of the dignity of spiritual being,")—that they are very serviceable in repressing open vice,—that they are still the most successful teachers, on the whole, of the lower and middle classes in the empire,—that, besides preaching and pastoral duties, they frequently read lectures or write books on general subjects,—that many of them are confessedly talented as well as good men, and a few are master-spirits,—and that their miserable remuneration, hard labours, and many difficulties, are enough to prove that they are actuated by disinterested motives. Why a class of which all this is undeniably true, should be objects of contempt and abuse to any wide-minded and philosophic man, and to such an extent, that eight months' identification with their order is spoken of as equivalent to a connexion of the same length of time with felons or scoundrels in a "Model Prison,"—I cannot comprehend, except on the ground (for which, alas! there is some evidence in the writer besides) of a quarrel with the religion they are employed in teaching. For the alternative may be stated thus—Either the religion of Christ is true, and the clergy false guides and unworthy representatives of it, in which case let the religion be vindicated at the expense of the teachers; *or*, Both of them are false, in which case let both be treated with equal severity and *with equal plainness*, as they deserve. The

author of the "Life of Sterling" takes neither side, but, while only daring, with "whispered breath" and "*sotto voce*," to attack Christianity, he throws out, what I must call, unmanly and untrue insults against the clergy.

My remarks in the fifth chapter have shown that I am no bigot to my order. But I do not see, for the life of me, were men like Jeremy Taylor, Dr. Donne, or John Howe, now alive, what there were to prevent them from appearing in the Christian pulpit, and thence shooting forth, as they did two centuries ago, the bright shafts of their genius. The difficulties of the Christian religion were not one whit greater then than now, and the evidences for it were not so strong, nor had they been so scientifically presented. There was, indeed, less denial, but there was much, and that of a far profounder kind than is common now. Spinoza and Hobbes were of the same century with Milton, Taylor, and Barrow. It may be true, indeed, that *more* higher minds are tinged with doubt in this age than in any preceding one; but the men I speak of, were not men to follow in crowds,—run in ruts, or put on scepticism as a fashionable mode of dress. It may be said, but why are there no such men now found in the Christian Church? I reply, first, neither are there any on the sceptical side equal to them; secondly, the non-existence of giants does not imply that all who remain are dwarfs; and, thirdly, if none of the transcendent order of the Barrows and Taylors be now in the Christian pulpit, yet taking the clergy of all denominations as a whole, they condense and exhibit a *mass* of intellect, knowledge, eloquence, and piety, on which few men are so lofty as to have a right to look down, and at which no really great and good man would sneer.

I had long observed, as well as heard of, *heartlessness* as a sure result, sooner or later, of the sceptical speculations of the day. Once the living image of compassion and disinterested love exhibited in Christ Jesus, is blotted out as a reality from our belief, however it may continue to exist as

an ideal figure in the fancy, the heart gradually hardens, either freezes in contempt or burns with a deadly flame of animosity to mankind. Tell me not, that fictitious characters of virtue can as much impress the heart and inspire the conduct as true historical ones. Why *do* such persons in fiction as David Deans, and his sublimely simple daughter, Jeanie, so move and so benefit us? Because they are both founded on fact; nay, are facts somewhat faded from the brightness of the original truth. The real Helen Walker preceded and, I doubt not, surpassed, the fictitious Jeanie Deans; and Scott must have seen, and I have seen myself, Scottish patriarchs of whom David Deans was but a faint copy. I remember conversing once with an excellent and eminent man, whose only fault is too good an opinion of the school I am describing, about Strauss' theory of Christ, when he remarked, —"It had been strange if God had produced the impression Jesus has made on the world, and the good he has effected, by a myth, instead of a real man." Yes, I thought, "strange," but something more; it had been IMPOSSIBLE, even to Omnipotence, to produce such effects by anything short of a real personage, as impossible as to make two and two five. Once you prove Christ to be a fiction, then his virtues next become fictitious, and then the whole thing becomes a beautiful picture, and, by ceasing to have life, loses *authority*, not to speak of the awful sanctions and glorious motives implied in Christ's words and doctrines, which, were his reality disproved, would become of no greater validity than Dante's pictures of hell, or than John Martin's "Plains of Heaven." Little Eva has converted many souls, I believe, as well as melted millions of eyes; but why? because, first, she was a portrait of many a real little Eva, and because, secondly, she *was a miniature* of Jesus Christ. Mere myths cannot propagate. Truth is not only stranger, but infinitely more powerful than fiction. If Christ be a fiction, where *could* the prototype have been found? Consequently, I fear many of those who begin by questioning Christ's real

existence, as well as divinity, end in hating his character. I saw this only in part, till I read the "Model Prisons." This book did me a great deal of good. It cut the last fibre of the tie which bound me to that school, and which had long been trembling. When the pamphlet came in, a member of this school was with me. I read it aloud, with a running commentary of unmitigated disgust and contempt. The vulgarity, meanness, and coarseness of the diction, the vile inhumanity of the spirit, the brutal language applied to John Howard, and the general want of sympathy with poor humanity, struck me as unworthy of a man, besides a man of genius. I was amazed and edified at the impression it made on the gentleman to whom I read it. His taste and sensibility were evidently shocked; but then, was not this the production of his Demigod or rather Divinity? Dared he doubt his infallibility? He attempted, accordingly, some weak plea about these always having been Sartor's sentiments, although his language, he admitted, had not improved,—an excuse equivalent to saying of a man who had begun to *swear*, that he was always in the habit of *cursing*,—as if the intensely infernal nature of the sentiments had *deserved* any other species of utterance,—as if, in this unguarded and truculent fury of speech, the veil had not just fortunately dropped, and revealed to thousands, who never saw it before, the real purpose and spirit of the man! He was, at last, compelled to tell me that "I did not know my own place in speaking disrespectfully of such a man;" to which, I think, I rejoined, that "far less had that man known *his* own place, in insulting John Howard, and, through him, Jesus Christ, and Humanity themselves."

The next year I saw this spirit of heartlessness—(a spirit, I may remark, fostered, not only by disbelief and dislike to Christ, but by that indifference to individual human life taught such men by their system)—illustrated in the far-famed Life of Sterling, a book the bitter *animus* of which against the clergy has often been exposed, but the heartless-

ness and the want of honesty in which are still more wonderful. It is very sad, indeed, to find how its author set himself to strip one garment of belief after another away from Sterling's mind, till he left him naked, and converted a glorious, bold being into such "a man as is made out of a forked radish, or after supper, out of a cheese-paring," and how he actually seems to "see the nakedness" of his *friend's* soul, and "not be ashamed," nay, to *glory* in the transformation. One is reminded of the triumph with which the sorcerer in the Arabian Nights must have seen Prince Bahman turned into a black stone! Should he reply, "What, although I taught him Pot-theism or Pantheism, if I taught him the truth; what, although I taught him that Christ was an impostor, Paul a sham, and that Christianity had become a *damnable humbug*,—if I taught him what was the melancholy fact." I reply, "Very well; but first, why did you not say so plainly before, and, again, why have you concealed what you *did* teach Sterling; why have you combined with him in 'keeping down the iron lids of these secrets with all the weights in your power;' why not have as much mercy on us poor deluded wretches as on him; why, since it seems you told one dying invalid (for the first time in *your* mortal life) something definite, not tell the same to a sick world, but continue to insult it by morsels of mysticism and rants of rage; why not even print, *if you dare*, Sterling's last lines to you, written, as you say, in 'tears and star-fire;' and why not explain how your account of his dying beliefs harmonizes with his wish to have the old Bible handed to him on his death-bed, which he used at Herstmonceux among the cottages? I knew you never *will* nor *dare reply* to these questions."

I may, perhaps, be thought to have dwelt too long on such subjects, but I know, as well probably as any man living, the influences exerted by the men I refer to, upon the mind of the country, and I wish to do all in my power to counteract it. I think I understand their tactics well. They know that a great number of Christians are doubtful about many

parts of their own creed, and that there is a general spirit of inquiry, unrest, and analysis abroad in the world. They are afraid that, nevertheless, the religion of Jesus may come out, as it has come often out before from the crucible, as unique, peculiar, divine, and more refined than at the beginning. Anxious that it should not be so, they have first of all affected to extract out of Christianity, what they call its kernel, and to leave the shell to shift for itself. They have next tried to classify the religion of the world with the ten thousand human systems, good, bad, or indifferent, which have appeared; and have started the paradox, that, because the serpent and the lamb are found in the same universe, *therefore* Belial and Christ are both varieties of God. They have magnified the duty of earthly work, and have separated the two precepts, "Diligent in business and fervent in spirit," from the third, "serving the Lord." They have opposed the humility and the childlikeness of the Gospel, and tried to substitute for them self-reliance, pride, or at least, the resolution of despair. They have magnified Nature and Man above the Word, while the Bible had said, "He hath magnified his Word above *all* his name." They have underrated the present power and resources of the Church,—feeble and poor, comparatively, as I grant these are. They have tried to deprive Christianity of its hold over the poor, and its authority over the science, literature, and, above all, over the politics and sciology of the day. They have, in order to answer the unanswerable argument from the Christian life, attempted a caricature of it, and inculcated, and even practised with considerable zeal, some of its outward virtues, although never for *Christ's sake*, but sometimes for the sake of the world, and sometimes for the sake, it is to be feared, of the Devil and *his* cause! They have at the same time shown themselves "wiser in their generation than the children of light;" are adepts in the art of religious *double-entendre;* are masters of a jargon which resembles the language of Canaan mixed up in a sort of porridge with the language of Ashdod, and whenever

any imprudent member of their sects, or sympathiser with them, such as an Atkinson, a Miss Martineau, an Holyoake, or a Francis Newman, breaks out into useless extravagances of unbelief or unwise displays of malignity, (even as Robespierre used to "swear down" some of the monstrous proposals of Hebert and Marat,) they, masters of this craft, too, have a 'word in season" and a withering sneer at hand for those well-meaning but blundering blockheads who *will* ride through Coventry, even though there should be few Peeping Toms!

I could have said somewhat more on these topics, but I defer it to another occasion, when, God-willing, I shall deal less in the statement of *impressions*, sincere and profound as these are, and more in REASONS for my feelings. If it is asked now,—To what exact point have your inquiries and disappointments in thought, led *you?* I hasten, although shortly and generally, to reply by a few statements, both positive and negative. And, first, I do now, far less than I did, worship genius. "The shepherd in Virgil," says Johnson, "grew at last acquained with Love, and found him a native of the rocks." A similar disenchantment has taken place with me. I admire and love genius still, but I find its general dwelling-place to be among rocks—the rocks of unhappy, morbid dispositions, of unsettled religious convictions, of querulous vanities and jealousies; rocks volcanic in structure, yet with masses of the unmelted ice of selfishness lurking in the hollows, and rocks which too often shade the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. I know, indeed, that some men of real genius and unsettled views, in our present age, as well as many of the *soi-disant* species, pretend that they have become healthier, happier, more benevolent, and more devout men than their brethren in the past, and let those who know them not, believe this! *I* do not believe it. Never did evil-speaking, jealousy, rancorous envy, rampant selfishness, and want of faith in anything but nature, their cliques, and themselves, more flourish than in the present day. Never were principle and heart more frequently divorced from intellect,

learning, and genius. I acknowledge, indeed, many honourable exceptions—men who have wedded religion in the rich and costly marriage-chamber of genius—men who are full of high-minded, amiable, and generous dispositions, and men who at least are distinguished by a perseverance and painstaking industry which are worthy of all commendation. But such exceptions too often occur in the obscurer nooks of the literary world, and among those who, however worthy, are not basking in the sunshine of general applause.

Apart from all this, I now feel far more forcibly than I did, that genius, unless consecrated and inspired by a deeper inspiration than its own, is but a sorry God, and may be likened to one of the strong genii of the Arabian Nights—very powerful always, but as frequently employed in doing the will of dark sorcerers and fiends, as in doing that of Allah. I may and do, always *admire*, but it is only when employed in God's service, that I can ever *worship*, or *trust*, or *hope* in genius.

I have, secondly, ceased to expect much from the discoveries of science. It has done, of course, much in the past, and is fussing away in imitation of those doings, still. What it has done, however, and whatever yet it is likely to do, concerns more man's earthly welfare than his spiritual good. It has told him much that has tended to make him comfortable, but scarcely one thing that has tended to make him happy. It has given him much information, but little real knowledge. It has furnished him with many beautiful images, but with little real inspiration. It has rather perplexed, than clarified, his original conception of God. And, in some directions at least, it seems fast approaching its limits. In geology, indeed, it may continue to supply new materials for contradictory theories for a long time to come; in chemistry, some expect that great prizes are yet reserved; but in astronomy, many besides us are becoming hopeless. How sanguine, nine years ago, were men's expectations about Lord Rosse's telescope! It was to pierce, they thought—or spoke as if they thought—

into the very heaven of heavens, and show us the central throne itself. It was, at all events, to solve the questions about the nebulæ, the plurality of worlds, and so forth; and yet we have seen, within these last two years, both these questions again canvassed with as much uncertainty and contradictory keenness as ever. The heavens are as far off as they were, and can tell us as little as before about either man, their spectator, or God, their Creator. Our British Association meetings are becoming laughing-stocks to the non-scientific public, and to many of the scientific too. It was, perhaps, a prophetic glimpse of the modern doings of our silly science, that made Pascal throw himself back in disgust at the study, into that shroud which he put on long before, and wore till death. And it would require the sarcasm of a Swift to describe adequately the ridiculous details of one of these "Legion-Clubs," where one eminent Professor puffs another to the skies for finding out a new species of duckweed, and where the other returns a profound bow as he compliments his learned brother on *his* having detected the undeveloped germ of a *third ear* in a rare variety of the ass; where one wears a new trefoil around his victorious brow, as if he had discovered the corn or the vine; where another is as proud of a new gas as if he had found out a principle more comprehensive than gravitation; and where a number of immortal men (?) are occupied for several hours in discussing the question: How comes it that *flies are able to walk upon the ceiling of the house?* a fact, by the way, proving that *their* heads are not quite so *heavy*, nor their *footing* quite so slippery, as those of our sapient philosophers. I know, indeed, that some of our most eminent *savans* are sick of the common-places and tiny results of modern science, and have striven hard to sublimate it, by connecting it with theological and moral principles, and with a spiritual poetry; but I know also that they have failed in the attempt, and are, in some instances, drawing off from the study in silent, contemptuous despair. My impression is, that scientific investigation is utterly unable to give

us any theological or moral light; because, first, there is very little to be found in Matter itself; and because, secondly, Science has no proper instrument of moral discovery in its hands: "Who can, by *searching*, find out God?" I need not dwell on the discrepancies between Science and Revelation; discrepancies which, in my opinion, have never yet been satisfactorily explained. Upon similar grounds I have very little faith or hope in Metaphysics; except, indeed, as they can be successfully wielded in the defence of Christianity, and to the confusion of its adversaries.

Thirdly: I have nearly as little trust in our common Christian schemes and common Christian hopes. My reasons for this, as a whole, I reserve till afterwards, but would only at present, express my amazement at the stress laid upon Missions by a Christian so enlightened as Henry Rogers, in the close of his "Defence of the Eclipse of Faith." That Christianity tends to propagate itself so long as it lives, is unquestionable; but why should it not be permitted by God for a season to die? Are there not symptoms that such a dark dispensation is before it? This WE will be believed to say not in exultation, but in deep sorrow. Christianity always radiates out from a centre; but what if, between the centre and the circumference, has crossed some cold blast from hell? Christianity is spreading still over the simple-minded in every country; but it is the fact, that it is not only desperately resisted by many of the mightiest minds in Christendom, but that the *young race* is, to a frightful extent, disaffected to it. That from this state our religion is to emerge, I firmly believe; but I am persuaded that no books of evidences, and that no increase to the extent or energy of existing machinery, can produce this desirable issue. The crisis is extraordinary; and extraordinary too must the remedy be. It is a crisis not for a heroic writer, so much as for a heroic actor. It was not Burke's magnificent "Reflections" which quelled the French Revolution; it was Wellington's steel. So—if I dare compare greater things to smaller—it is not the "Eclipse of Faith,"

although a book of great power and genius, that is to extinguish modern infidelity; it is the "Sword coming out of the mouth of Him who rideth upon the white horse."

Fourthly: I believe in a personal Devil, as well as in a personal God; and find in his prodigious ramified power, and old deepening hate to Deity, a solution of much, if not all, the evil in the universe; a solution at which the Unitarians of our enlightened age may laugh their fill, but which seems Scriptural, simple, comprehensive; which saves man in some measure from the blame of the fearful phenomena to be found on earth, and casts a glimmer, at least, of light, upon the origin of sin, misery, and evil. Once give up the idea of supernatural malignant agency; of a Power resisting and counterplotting the good God; and you give up what is one of the main principles in the Bible, and what explains much in the plot and the contest of things,—as distinctly as the character of Rashleigh, in "Rob Roy," explains many of the complications of the otherwise unaccountable and incredible tale. On the difficulties, objections, extent, &c. of this theory, I enter not now; but sure I am that a greater truth than is generally suspected lies in *this direction;* and I am much mistaken if such Christian minds as Henry Rogers, and the author of the "Restoration of Belief," have not come contemporaneously to a somewhat similar phase of belief. Arnold and Milton, too, saw the importance of the same truth.*

Fifthly: Without dwelling on points which I hold in common with all Christians; such as Christ's Divinity, his Real and True Atonement for sin, the Trinity, the office of the Holy Spirit, &c., I repeat my profound, growing, deepening, and, I may almost say, unalterable conviction, in the Second Advent of Christ, as the hope of the world, the glorious complement and crown of the dispensation of mercy, the conclusive blow to the Evil One, and to all those evil agents and

* It is curious, that since writing this I find that James Martineau has been driven to admit Supernatural Evil Agents, in spite of his systems.—See Prospective Review for 1855. Article, "Maurice's Essays."

influences which, under him, are ruining the race. Of the times and the seasons I say nothing, and think that nothing should be said, except with great caution; neither do I *here* dwell on difficulties, objections, or on the extent of the deliverance to be effected. I state only that broad principle which the Day shall declare; and declare in thunder and in flame.

I offer, after all, the above outline of a creed, not as the creed of a philosopher, not as deduced from long and deep study of exegesis and dogmatic theology—although I believe it consistent with both—still less as the reverie or dream of a poet, but as the *creed of a babe*, for on such matters I desire to "humble myself and become as a little child." It is a creed which will and must be distasteful to the proud votaries of the sciences and the philosophies of these days—those sciences so shallow, that the depth of a nutshell beside that of the infinite baffles them, and those philosophies so uncertain and so hollow, that they have not yet decided whether man be a part or a whole—a reality or a dream. It is a creed which can have few charms for most of our present race of poets, who have gone a-gadding through this torn, ruptured earth, this night-and-day-divided universe, this devil-ridden society, this *true chaos*, on which the Spirit has hardly begun to brood, and searching for a unity as to come, which, if they cannot *find*, they can *forge*. I hope for little acceptance for it either from many of the votaries of our common religious systems, or men who are fleeing from terrible facts to hide their ostrich heads in organizations and money-moved machineries, and whose religion is too often a semi-worldly, semi-spiritual cant, priding itself, with all its pretensions to piety, more on the names of noblemen who attend religious meetings, and on the multitude of carriages to be seen at public religious breakfasts, than on the good it professes to do, to a distracted world and a riven Church.

But I am not without my hopes that this creed of a babe,

essentially that of Pascal, Foster, Irving, and Arnold, may obtain acceptance with many babe-like Christians in all denominations, who may find in it some of the silent beatings of their own hearts expressed, and *that* said in language which they had only been able to say by tears and sighs. There are many in the age who are not prepared to believe in full, either the philosophic view of religion, or all that is contained in the common creeds of Christendom. To them, my view may possibly have some interest, especially after it has been cast, as I am in another work seeking to cast *it*, into a larger and shapelier system than my space in this permits. At all events it commends itself to my soul, especially at the times when that soul is most weaned from the world, most distrustful of itself, and most penetrated with the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. To babes I commend it, even as something of it I have learned from babes. Oh! how precious to me have been the prattlings of little children, and those subtle questions and still subtler replies that I have heard coming from their spotless lips, and have listened to as to oracular breathings! How true the words: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained *strength*;" aye, strength of insight, to which that of most philosophers and theologians is abject weakness and folly! Almost every doctrine now "most surely believed" by me, I have heard again and again (sometimes without much conviction till long afterwards) from the lips of prattlers, ere or after their evening prayer was said, at that hour when those acquainted with children must have noticed how, after they are watered with the baptism for the night, and clad in their sleeping robes, their souls and bodies seem both liberated; and how, as a double portion of the child's spirit seems to fall on them, their utterances sometimes far transcend the thoughts of the highest genius. Then and there, the impossibility and madness of the ideas that God has created evil; that evil is or can be good; that the Devil is in league with God; have been dis-

closed in the language of those "of whom *is* the kingdom of Heaven." From the child's shrine I have heard again and again the doctrines of a fall, and the antagonism of good and evil, proclaimed.

Once a little boy was walking on the brink of the German Ocean with his nurse. He saw the waves rising, and then, as if fiercely pulled down from below, subsiding into their channel. He asked her: "Who makes all these waves rise, Mary?" She answered: "Oh! God, my boy." "And does the Devil," he rejoined, "sit below, and *draw them all down again?*" Had he come an hour after to the beach, he would have found a silvery ripple the only relic of the struggle; and would have seen in this that issue of the great sphere-shaking contest, "which shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Children, too, all love the idea of Christ, and testify to his reality. Strauss never could have been truly a child. Was Sartor ever taught to say—

> "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look upon a little child;
> Pity my simplicity,
> And suffer me to come to thee."

Newton, we know, said something like this on his death-bed; and so the greatest might do, and but for pride, would do still. Children, too, all feel the reality of sin, and that death, as well as it, is no make-believe, no mere transition state, no angel with a black mask and an inverted torch, but a dire infliction; and they *wonder as much as we how they are called to endure it.* In many other points I look upon them as the best commentators on the Bible; and even as it is granted that they are in their instinct admirable judges of the human character, so also are they admirable judges of the divine. Tell me not that they are taught all this by their parents; it is not true—their parents themselves are often "astonished" at their understanding and their answers.

Slump not up these facts, as Emerson does, under the general term, "the wisdom of children;" the question recurs, "*Whence* have they their wisdom, having never learned?" That sin and Satan have something to do with children, I deny not, else they would never suffer nor *so* die; but that Christ has something far more to do with them, I believe,—and I hear the testimony which those little children, "crying in the temple," gave to him during the days of his flesh, reverberated by myriads of voices since, and swelled, besides, by those of child-like men in every age and in every family of mankind. Wordsworth saw this truth, in part, when he said—

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy.
* * * * *
Trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home."

We are fast, I believe, coming to the alternative, the religion of the philosopher, or that of the babe,—referring here not specially to my version of it, but to the general child-like spirit and principles of Christianity, the religion of Him whom I have sometimes called "the Eternal Child." The question amounts simply to this,—Are we to become for ever the bond-slaves of matter, and its confused and contradictory phenomena; to sing *esto perpetua* to the fearful farce or tragedy going on, and to call that "all God's," of which we know a large portion to belong to the Devil, the world, and the flesh; or are we to entertain the belief, chiefly on the evidence of our own souls, echoing the words of the Book, that a divine principle or power is working against innumerable adversaries in the universe, and is, through the God-Man, Christ Jesus, yet to overcome, and in overcoming either to translate us, if we believe on him, out of this dark world for ever, or to *fit it* for the habitation of Christ's "little children, and of Christ himself?" All the tendencies of the mere intellect of the world seem running to the former; Christians should be taking their stand more and more firmly

on the latter. While yielding all that can properly be conceded to the claims of *genuine* science, literature, art, and philosophy, and while admiring to enthusiasm the universe in its poetical aspects, let them cling to the grand principles, supernaturalisms, and hopes of the Bible, and be prepared rather to sacrifice a thousand human systems than one "Thus saith the Lord;" rather all the stars, were it, which it is not, necessary, than one of the fringes of the garment of Him who came from above them the Teacher of Galilee.

CHAPTER VIII.

DREAMS.

I WOULD exhort all my readers to skip this chapter, unless they possess, along with a good deal of the speculative, a good deal also of the poetical. I have been, as I have hinted in a former chapter, all my life, and am still at forty-two, an incorrigible dreamer, both by night and by day, and I propose to recount, for the benefit of the imaginative, a few of the more remarkable of those reveries by day, and visions by night, which have crossed my spirit.

Near the cataract described in my first chapter, there was a deep pit, partly covered with brambles and trees. It was not generally known, and even those who knew, shunned it, because it bore some Gaelic name implying a tradition that it was "the Mouth of Hell." This, however, when I was a boy, instead of deterring, drew me to it by a kind of fascination... One Saturday afternoon in, I think, 1824, I was wandering in the wood alone, and found myself, ere I was aware, near the brink of this mysterious pit. I got up on a tree, which hung its branches right over the mouth, and was gazing down, with considerable curiosity, when lo! under my weight the branch broke, and I was precipitated in. My fall was partly broken by the bushes which lined the mouth and sides of the pit, but the fall was far enough to stun and disable me; and when I came to my consciousness, I found myself in a pit too steep and deep to be scaled, amongst stones and mud, a dim twilight around, and only a single speck of blue sky shining through the brambles, as if to mock my imprisonment. Here was a predicament! The

pit was in the centre of a solitary wood; it was shunned by many of those who did know of its existence; strange cries, it was said, had been heard from it at midnight; and how likely it was that my voice, were I to shout, would be confounded with these, if it were not drowned by the cataract which was howling at a short distance. My feelings were disagreeable enough, and as the afternoon darkened into evening, they became worse. I thought of the agony my parents would feel at my absence; I began to remember the strange stories I had heard about this pit; and the wind, which had now begun to arise, had a dreary, dirge-like sound, mingling, in melancholy concert, with the cry of the cataract. One star had come, and looked through the bushes; had shone with tantalizing brightness for an hour, and then, as if its interest in the lonely boy had been satisfied, had gone on its journey. It was succeeded by a windy gush of moonlight, which seemed how strange, sad, and ghostly, as it trembled through the trees, and went out in darkness! Then, by-and-by, came the plash of rain, which although diverted by the bushes, was yet heavy enough to drench me to the skin. Now, for the first time, I felt utterly overwhelmed by the terrors of my situation, and, after crying for some time aloud for help, I burst out into a flood of tears, and continued to sob and weep till, at last, worn out by cold, hunger, and misery, I fell asleep. I remember even yet the dreams I had on that strange, wet pillow, and amidst the fierce or woful sounds which were wailing over my head. Indeed, all the particulars of that night are stamped indelibly upon my memory. My sleep was one dire fantastic dream of hell, and fiends, and fires. I imagined myself in that awful place,—not as a sufferer, but as a spectator. Methought, I saw some who had been long in the pit of perdition, and who were laughing at all new-comers, and wishing them joy of their "honeymoon of horrors;" and others that cried that an earnest, burning reality like this was better than a deliberate lie, like earth; and others who said that perdition was no worse than famine;

and others who were going about, everywhere seeking for, but finding none to return to the world, and tell some of their relations not to come after them to this place of torment. There were, I thought, sudden Auroras of false hope, that ever and anon visited the place, and created a ghastly joy,—a joy, however, which speedily passed, and was followed by a deeper darkness than before. Some there ran about in despair and fury, cursing themselves because they had not "wrought better for their wages." Others I saw, who had laid themselves down, with a pale, stedfast, maniac smile upon their faces, and were looking above for the Advent of a Deliverer. A few rushed through the crowded streets, predicting that an amnesty of madness and oblivion was speedily to be proclaimed from heaven. Other dreadful figures and sounds there were, but more confused, of men that had been there for centuries, and yet had not done wondering that they were not in heaven; of poets, trying to relieve their agonies by song; and philosophers, seeking to explain them away by sophistry, and proving that "this was the best of all possible worlds;" and of the music of awful Voices from above, speaking evidently of the lost, and even naming them: but the talk was so far off and so fragmentary that none could tell to what it pointed, whether to hope or to despair; and thus *there was a new torment—that of suspense—in hell.* It was a relief to awake from such dismal dreams, and to find myself in a real earthly pit. The next day, having been missed, a great possé of the villagers came to the place, and I was rescued from a most alarming adventure, which had well nigh cost me my life. I came out benumbed, hardly able to crawl, and with a shuddering recollection of my tumultuous and terrible dreams.

Some time after I read in an old magazine an account of an American minister, named Tennant, who in his youth had apparently given up the ghost. The company had met for his funeral; but it was delayed, owing to his brother, who insisted that he was not dead. He ultimately revived, but

his memory was found to be gone. He had to commence his studies again, and had advanced as far in Latin as Cornelius Nepos. He was reading, along with his brother, a portion of that author one day, when he suddenly stopped, put his hand to his head, and cried, "I have surely read this before!" and, in an instant, as if on the pulling up of a blind, all that he knew formerly came rushing back on his recollection. His brother now questioned him if he remembered aught of what happened during his trance. He said he found himself in the company of a winged guide, who conducted him to a vast multitude, who were employed in singing the sweetest and most ravishing strains he ever heard, in a place of infinite splendour. He expressed to his guide an ardent desire to join them, but was told that he must first return to earth. He remembered no more till he found himself lying in his coffin. He had hinted to his brother that he recollected some of the words he heard the blessed singing, but no persuasion could prevail on him to recount them. This story made a great impression on my imagination, and one day, while reposing on the summit of the hill surmounting the cataract, its sound, mellowed by distance, in my ears, and soothing my spirit, and the fine prospect below shining in an afternoon sun, I dropped asleep, and had the following dream.

The first part of it was somewhat terrible. I imagined myself dying; and in the room, I thought the faces of my friends were fixed on mine with peculiar intensity. At last, methought, I died; and yet, strange to tell, I imagined myself still alive; and that while my weeping friends were taking a last kiss of my cold lips, I felt the keenest anguish in not being able to return the kiss; and while one of them was shutting my eyes, I seemed to make a desperate effort to resist it, and thought, with a pang, "I shall now be blind as well as dead." It was *conscious death;* and while conscious sleep is the most delightful of all sensations, conscious death seemed the most dreadful. I *felt* myself getting cold and stiff; *felt*, with what a horrible sensation! the grave-clothes put on;

saw the windows darkened; the weepers withdraw; and felt myself alone. How the word "alone" seemed to gall and wither my heart! I knew my dearest friends to be in the next chamber; I heard their voices; and yet, had all Sahara or the ocean been between me and them, I could not have been more effectually separated. It was the idea, not of death's noisomeness or decay, but of death's solitude, that overwhelmed me. I struggled, I thought, to break the dreadful silence, and to rouse me from the accursed repose; but in vain. There was one picture in the bedroom—that of an old man—and his eyes seemed to know my state, and to look down on me with a smile of scorn and mockery, as they shone through the twilight of the room. Then the scene shifted; and I found that I had left my dead body, and, as I hovered in the air over it, I gave it a last look; and, strange to relate, I remember, along with a feeling of regret and of horror, having a strong inclination to laugh, as the idea of my corpse being an absurd resemblance of my former self, came upon me. Then I seemed moving upwards on wings swifter than the pinions of eagles, or than the highest flight of imagination. I left the earth behind, and saw the sun as my momentary footstool, while I pursued my way. I then plunged into the midst of a hundred suns, and knew I was in the heart of my old favourite constellation, the Plough. Speeding through it, I saw before me what seemed a Burning Bush of Stars, so closely were they set together; but when I entered it, I found myself in the centre of a firmament far surpassing ours in the magnitude, multitude, and splendour of its orbs. Upwards I sped from firmament to firmament, and stranger, and wilder, and mightier, did each seem. In one especially the stars were cast into the most singular shapes; there were horned moons composed of brilliant stars; here eagles of stars flew; there lions of stars ramped; yonder, pyramids of stars towered; and, on the edge of the horizon, a constellation shaped like a leviathan opened his jaws, and threw out a cataract of suns. Swifter still became my flight, till I felt myself swimming

through a starry ocean, and with every stroke of my hand dividing waves of worlds. At last I saw what seemed a bright shore to my sea; and landing, rested for an instant on an orb which stood apart from all the rest, and was as large as thousands of the suns I had passed. This was the terminus of the material creation; the gigantic sentinel of the system keeping watch on the verge of the dark, unutterable deep. Across that awful star I rushed, and from its farther side, as from a precipice, I looked for a moment across a gulf of utter darkness, which seemed, nevertheless, to be distinct and glossy as the sheen of the raven's wing. Shudderingly, yet eagerly, I plunged in and bore away, passing from one depth of gloom into another, till light seemed a forgotten dream, and I wearied in the greatness of my way. Suddenly, I discerned a far-shooting beam, trembling (like the finger of one searching for a lost jewel) as it pierced downwards into the depths of Night. How soothing, after first the glare of light, and next the waste of darkness, seemed that solitary ray to my imagination! It was not composed of fire, but of mild and shorn light, and seemed rather to encourage than to repel approach. I rose, I thought, on it as on a ladder, not with my former impetuous speed, but slowly, and with awful reverence, for I began to feel that I was nearing Heaven. From this ray-path, as from a centrical position, I saw, on either side, worlds of wonderland stretching around, all composed of ethereal matter, giving forth an innocuous but most brilliant light,—and with beings of ineffable loveliness standing on the shore, or soaring through the spaces above it; while in the distance appeared, as the centre of them all, a luminous orb, brighter than the sun, softer than the moon, and larger than the entire space included in the sweep of a summer sky. I was reminded of a sight I had often seen on earth,—of a thousand fair and fleecy clouds gathering round the autumn sun. Up through these cloud-worlds, fixing my eye on the Mighty Sun overhead, I continued to arise on the ray, till, in the midst of the orb's enlarging surface and increasing brightness, I saw the shape

of an Angel distinctly defined; and I knew instantly who that Angel was; and there came on me a thrill of trembling joy, mingled with a strange fear, and a desire for the first time to return; when, methought, between me and the marvellous light in the Being's eyes, there came in again the faces I had seen at my bedside, all smiling on me with a joy so unspeakable, that I wept; and awaking, found myself reclining on the hill over the cataract, with the evening shadows resting on the landscape, the mist of the night descending on the brow of Ben-Ample, and the red moon slowly rising in the north-east, like a torch uplifted by some gigantic but reluctant hand, as of an Ethiopian slave showing his master's way into a dark room where a murder has recently been committed by the slave himself.

I have repeatedly had dreams of the Future State of the World, of the Second Advent, and the Judgment Day; some of which I may recount. In one of them, I fancied myself standing on the hill behind the town of ——, where I reside. I looked for some familiar objects, but found them not. A large, new, and splendid Infirmary, which should have been seen lying at my feet, had vanished. To the east of the town there had been a well-built and thickly-peopled Asylum; it too had disappeared. Close beside each other had stood a Barracks and a Bridewell; but I could see no vestige of either. The thick smoke which used to darken the atmosphere had cleared away. Strangest of all, instead of the many spires and steeples, indicating the various churches and sects into which the town was torn, I saw one simple edifice covering a vast space of ground, and into which all the people seemed to be flocking. Suddenly the scene of my dream shifted, and it seemed to be London that lay before my eye. But it was no longer "crowned with darkness." I missed, too, many objects which had been prominent. There were no Theatres, and no Houses of Parliament, and no Palaces. It seemed Sabbath, and all the streets were filled with multitudes flocking to worship; and so great was the difference between

the past and present aspect of the city, that the shock of the contrast awoke me. Falling asleep immediately again, I saw a much grander spectacle. I stood on a hill, commanding the view of a wide and varied prospect. At my feet, to the west, was a huge chasm, or valley, down which rolled a clear, full, and rapid stream. To the east and south lay rugged mountains, with many traces of vegetation and of culture beginning to appear upon their sides, and in the valleys between them; terminating in a large lake, or sea. To the north towered chains of hills, bounded by one high and hoary peak, the manifest king of the territory. Valleys, plains, meadows, and woods of the richest verdure diversified the prospect; through which, too, rivers ran sparkling, and lakes reposed amidst their solitudes. Across the chasm, to the west, lay a city clothed in the "light that never was on sea or shore," towered, turreted, but unwalled; its broad ample streets crowded with men of all colours, kindreds, and climes, and surmounted with a temple, built of marble whiter than ever came from the quarries of Paros. The roof of the temple was flat and wide, and in the midst of it was erected a throne of diamond; and on that throne sat a Form; in whose eyes like a flame of fire, in whose smile of ineffable benignity, and in whose garment, dipped as it were in blood, I recognised the Angel whom I had seen standing in the Sun of Heaven. Many circles surrounded Him as He sat; one of which seemed composed of aged and venerable sages,—another of poets,—another of virgins,—another of "God's images carved in ebony,"—and another, and the nearest to Him that sat on the throne, of little children. Winged figures hovered around, and, ever and anon, ambassadors from distant provinces of earth and of the universe approached his presence, and communed with or bowed before Him. And over his head there shone a coronet of glorious light, with the words (in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew) inscribed above it: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews;" and beside this was traced the sentence: "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and

they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." And I awoke, and behold it was a dream; but a dream of which I needed no interpretation.

The next dream presented itself after the former in point of time, although in strict logic I should have recorded it first. I imagined myself in my native valley, and that a rumour had circulated that it was to be swallowed up by an earthquake. A man had passed through the village, it was said, at evening, and in haste, and had cried aloud, in the ears of all he met, the tidings of approaching doom. His name no one knew, but his appearance seemed that of a wild bard—of one who, like the hermit Brian in the "Lady of the Lake," the child of the spectre, might have been let down to the ledge of a cataract in the skin of a white bull, and whose hair had, ere morning, been blanched by the terrible visions which had visited his slumber from that "hell of waters" thundering beside him. He disappeared as mysteriously as he had come; but, methought, the impression of his words was such, that on the morning of the fore-fated day all the inhabitants got up, as one man, and left the region. I joined the throng; but after travelling with them for a few miles to the eastward, I turned aside, and went up alone to the summit of a lofty mountain overlooking Strath-Rennie to the south-west, and toward the north-east throwing its shadow over the dark Loch Tarkin, that I might on it wait, and witness the destruction of the plain and village I loved so dearly. The day seemed sympathizing with the expected catastrophe. A gloom, reminding me of what I had witnessed on the morning of the 3d of August, 1829, the day when the waterspouts burst on the Monadhfeadh mountains, and deluged all Morayshire,—such a massed-up, portentous frown now lay along the whole sky. Clouds especially hung heavily over the devoted valley, through which the Rennie was seen, and scarcely seen, to flow. Suddenly, as often happens in dreams, the view widened; and, first, all Scotland, and then all Europe, and part of Asia, seemed in sight, and the same deep gloom had

fallen on the whole, and the same portentous silence was over all. The sky seemed bowed down and burdened below a weight heavier than thunder—a weight of wrath. At times the clouds became more transparent, but it was only to show, as through a crape veil, an expanse of fire behind them; and then, again, the gloom closed in, and became thicker than before.

But how distinct every object appeared amidst the darkness! The hills of Scotland, Cumberland, Wales, and Ireland—the grey Alps—the Ural mountains, on the north—Iceland, with all her fire-springs and everlasting snows—the forest-veil of Germany—the slim, snaky, shape of Italy, curling between the mountains and the sea—Spain and the Pyrenees—the cities of Europe—Paris and St. Petersburg, both, as I thought, *illuminated*, and by the illumination rendering the darkness more visible—Vienna seeming to be *on fire*—London almost lost in its cloud of smoke and the preternatural darkness—Rome painted as if by Rembrandt on the canvas of the distant sky—and, further off still, Jerusalem and Sinai, which appeared to stand immediately south of the Holy City, and to have its summit shrouded with clouds, and its sides furrowed with streams of flame:—such was the map I seemed to see; and, while gazing intensely at it, the silence was suddenly disturbed by a loud voice, and lo! in the valley at my feet I beheld the mysterious stranger, running along distractedly, and I heard him crying,—"The Great Day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" At the sound of these words, methought, the darkness lifted up itself like a curtain, and there appeared beyond it—not, as I expected, a great white throne, or a frowning judgment-seat, or a blaze of consuming splendour—but a solitary Child, surrounded by a mild moonlight effulgence, a rainbow over his head, and a book in his hand. Yet from that Child's eye what power, amazement, terror, joy, there seemed to go forth! I saw the proud cities trembling visibly; I saw the reaper throwing down his hook in the

harvest-field—the ploughman quitting the plough in mid-furrow—the merchant shutting his ledger for ever—the railway-train rushing through a death-dark tunnel into the blaze of His glory, and the passengers uttering one wild, wide cry—armies fixed and fascinated amidst a reeling charge—dancers stiffened by wonder into the statues of themselves—the murderer's arm arrested, and the Atheist's tongue cooled and silenced, as the Child's eye looked on; and I heard, as prophets had foretold, "all kindreds of the earth wailing because of Him," with wails which were echoed by the loud cries of animals in the fields and the forests, and, as it seemed, too, by supernatural shrieks from the air, and under the earth, and the dim caverns of the sea.

Next, there came another voice, saying, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain brought low;" and straightway the lofty mountains of the world seemed to sink, and nameless hills arose; Lebanon became a plain, and Sinai lowered his crest of cloudy fire, while the little hill Calvary erected itself, and on it the Eternal Child was seen throned, and all nations and kindreds appeared before his bar. There was no citing of witnesses, no leading of evidence, no reading of names, no set accusation, and no formal acquittal; as of old each animal passed before Adam and received its destiny in its name, so every being out of unnumbered millions, came before the Child, looked at Him, received his look and his one word in return,—and passed on, to the right hand or to the left, either blasted or blessed, but in either case submissive and silent—although the silent doom on the brow of the former class was terrible to look at as the brand of Cain,—and the silent joy in the eyes of the other was the miniature of heaven. Every one seemed to see his own Conscience glaring or gleaming on him through the eye of Christ, and the foot of the cross-shaped throne seemed the tremendous point at which the two streams of moral being—the good and bad—the true and the false—the child-like and the fiend-like—disparted, to meet no more at

all for ever. I saw philosophers, and generals, and kings, and men of genius, and Christian authors, whose names I mention not, advancing confidently to encounter the eye of the Child, and suddenly shrinking away from it, and staggering forward, as if blinded and riven by a flash of lightning, to their "own place." And I saw humble females, and simple missionaries, and little children, trembling as they came near the Child, till one look of love reassured them, and one word seemed to fall like a baptism on them, and they passed on, happy, and yet as humble as before—while the Child looked up to Heaven, and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight;" casting, methought, after uttering these last words, a longing, lingering look of pity upon the hapless but haughty giants of the race who had turned to the downward path. And then, behind all this, I heard, as it were, the Dead Sea rising from its bed, and rolling on to meet and engulf the victims, who were hurrying down the valley of Jehoshaphat to their doom. But while my eye was following them southwards, I felt myself rapidly propelled by the pressure of the multitude toward the throne where the Child was sitting; and the contest of feeling between desire and reluctance to meet that look from which "Heaven and Earth had fled away," awoke me from my dream.

I shall cite one more, which very deeply, at the time, impressed my imagination. It was a waking dream—one of those which occur when the eye is open, and its sense *not* shut—one of those

"Visions which arise without a sleep."

This strange reverie came on me one July evening, while I was revisiting my native Strath from the eastward. It was a lovely evening, and seemed, in its superfluous beauty, as if

the essence of many beautiful summer eves had gone to its glorification. The crescent moon, in the south-west, hung over a mountain, which was covered, from foundation to aerial summit, with rich young firs, larches, and pines. Near the moon, yet preserving due and reverent distance, shone the evening star, like a gem newly set, and trembling on an imperial forehead. To the south, lay the deep groves of Castle-Donachar, with its turrets surmounting the still lake and ample park; while the Rennie, turning away from the proud pile, flowed down a low-lying and most lovely little valley of its own—like a Burns, abandoning the hopeless task of continuing his captivation of the upper classes of his day, to find among the poor the fit audience for his immortal song. To the west, the town of C—— was just visible, adding silently the contribution of its silent smoke to the manifold serenities and stillnesses of the evening sky. Farther on, in the same direction, towered against a "sea of glass mingled with fire," down which the sun had newly sunk, like Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the black, peaked, volcanic-seeming mountains which gird my native vale. On the east, the sky was grey and quiet, with large white, ghost-like clouds rising over the horizon. The whole was a combination of the peaceful and the splendid—of all the powers and elements of grandeur and of beauty, harmonized, and, as it were, asleep in each other's arms—a compromise of evening and of night in their finest effects and tints of intensest poetry.

It was while walking slowly through this lovely landscape, and pondering much the mystery that overhangs and darkens a universe so fair, that I fell into the following reverie,—which pleasurably occupied my mind for six successive miles, and came to a climax as the red west was seen fading into night, through an avenue of ash-trees a mile from my mother's dwelling. I seemed to see three great separate spheres, of different sizes and colours, situated, I thought, somewhere in the centre of the Milky Way. One of these was a black sun, such as astronomers tell us do probably exist in remote parts

of the universe—the other an orb of light, greatly surpassing our sun in size and splendour—the third seemed a planet much larger than our earth, and which revolved between the others. Each of these, methought, was pervaded by a spirit who was ordering and animating each. The spirit of the black sun was an evil spirit, of great but limited power; he was old, but not from everlasting. The spirit of the bright orb was benevolent and uncreated, and the light of his orb had everlastingly and necessarily proceeded from him, as thought from the brain, or expression from the eye. The spirit of the planet was neither good nor bad—she was simply powerful and intelligent, and had proceeded from the inhabitant of the Bright Sun. "

On the surface of this latter orb, as I gazed, there appeared a being of beautiful form and symmetry, the climax of a long series of creations. He was beautiful, and made after an angelic mould, but there was no angelic life in him. I saw the being lying naked and lifeless on the ground, and his attitude seemed a dumb prayer for inspiration from on high. Nor was this prayer vain, for in a little, I beheld as it were a ripple of light crossing his face like a breeze, and lo! he opened his eyes—he breathed—he arose on his feet, and looked up in gratitude to the bright sun vertical over his head, as to the creator and father of that immortal spirit which had entered him. Nobler being than this now could not be conceived,—for to the perfection of animal nature given him by his mother the planet, he added the bright intelligence bestowed on him by his father, the unearthly sun. At length, however, the sun set, and with the darkness appeared that other lurid orb, paling all the constellations, shedding a frightful *chiaroscuro* over the planet, and darting beams of disastrous influence into the newly-awakened mind of its child. When the morning and the bright sun came, the being was changed to the worse—a fearful derangement had seized upon his whole nature, which he transmitted to others, who seemed to spring from him. Instead of looking

up in reverence to the bright sun, he and his descendants now blasphemed it—now sang the praises of the black and baleful orb—and now stooping to the dust of the planet, cried out,—"Thou art our mother, and alone divine. Dust we are, and nothing but dust, and to dust we shall return." In vain did the bright sun shed his purest rays on these children of the planet; in vain did ripple after ripple of breeze-like beams cross their souls. They longed always for the night, and when it came, they did continual obeisance to the dark lumniary and to their own planet, as if they were their true and only parents. Their nobility of aspect deserted them—their look became gross, their appetites were brutal, their passions fiendish—their mother herself looked on them with disdain, and punished them with many evils and terrors; the black sun, having the "power of death," scorched and withered them, and the bright sun again and again withdrew his shining, and seemed threatening to forsake their sky for ever.

At last one night, while the children of the planet, who had become utterly miserable, were gazing hopelessly at the rising of the dark orb, there appeared a strange phenomenon. From the bright sun which was going down in the west, there, as it were, detached itself a new star, milder in aspect, and softer in light, which rapidly mounted the sky, and sat in the zenith, in the very spot whence the dark luminary had usually poured down his fell lustre on the planet. How beautiful that star appeared! How the constellations seemed to rejoice at his coming, and to crowd around his divine car! How the dark luminary trembled even while rising to meet, and to resist the star! and how the eye of the poor planet-children began to brighten, and how long-forgotten joy came out upon their dim faces like a stream from a cavern, when they beheld the beautiful star! and how great their horror and grief when they saw the black orb preparing to do battle with this mild luminary,—and with malignant fury, and beams like arrows of fire, assailing it in mid-heaven, while the star

seemed to fade, shrink, and die in the contest, and the black orb again resumed its station at the zenith. It was said, however, by some, that the star was not extinguished in the fight, as had been generally thought, but had been seen retiring in splendour toward its parent sun, and some predicted that it was to return again and renew the contest. Meanwhile it was noticed, that although the black orb had regained the zenith, it was lessened in size, and that its malignant power over the children of the planet was greatly diminished. More of them now worshipped the bright sun, and even raised altars and held feasts in honour of the beautiful star, which had shone so shortly and with such heavenly sweetness,—and their general condition was improved and exalted.

Thus matters went on for ages. Divisions, however, among the planet's children increased and multiplied. Some maintained that the black orb, the bright sun, and the beautiful star, were only varieties of the same power, shapes of the same spirit, and that darkness and evil were both to be worshipped, as well as good and light. Others asserted that they all were mere modifications of the lower atmosphere, adjusted for the purpose of general deception, by the power of the spirit of the planet. Others, admitting the reality of the phenomena, denied that there were any personal agents at work in their production. Many held that the children of the planet owed all their qualities, good or bad, to the nature of the ground out of which they were taken, and that there was no such being as the spirit of the planet, and still less that there were any spirits in the bright and black suns, the phenomena of which were entirely produced by dire necessity. Others asserted that the bright sun had made the black one, and that the evils which that had inflicted on the planet came from it. Some said the beautiful star was of the same essence as the bright sun, while others denied this, calling it now an exhalation of the planet, and now a messenger in disguise from the black orb. Many even of those who held

that the star was the child of the sun, denied that it was to return to renew the fight with the black orb, but was to triumph over it solely through the little track of light it left when it departed; while others cried aloud,—"See how the black orb is again growing in magnitude and power; how the light even of the bright sun is becoming dimmer every day; how despair or disbelief is seizing upon the majority of creatures; how the worshippers of the beautiful star themselves are beginning to tamper with the votaries of the planet and the black orb! surely it is high time for that star to appear again, and with

'New-spangled ore, flam? in the forehead of the evening sky.'"

In this deep crisis, the planet seemed rather the field of the contest than to help either party, and so with many of those of its children who were "of the earth, earthy." On the other hand, there were two parties—the haters of the beautiful star, and his lovers; parties—the members of whom, however, in the increasing darkness, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish from one another. Among the haters of the star, I noticed those whose selfish lives and proud theories its light had condemned; those who saw nothing in sun, moon, or stars but mere mechanism; those, who, on the contrary, looked upon it as the "stuff of which dreams are made;" those who regarded it merely with the eye of the poet; and those who were under misapprehensions as to the real character and purpose of the orb's coming. On the other hand, many child-like beings who had believed in the first appearing of the beautiful star, were now longing for the fulfilment of the hope that it was to appear again; while a far larger class, who yet loved it and had blessed its first coming, were expecting deliverance, in some other way, from the terrible and strengthening tyranny of the black orb. Great uncertainty and agony prevailed; many hopes and many fears arose in both parties, to be disappointed,—till at last a fearful tempest broke over the planet, such as had never been wit-

nessed before, which raged for many days, and blotted out every vestige of light from the heavens. When the clouds at length disparted, the children of the planet saw the dark orb and the long-lost beautiful star engaged in deadly contest —a contest which shook the spheres, and made the planet tremble. It was decided by the utter destruction of the black orb, which seemed, as it fell athwart the planet, to sweep into its train its more devoted worshippers, who, along with it, were whirled into bottomless gulfs of night. The clouds now entirely disappeared, and showed the Beautiful Star in the ascendant, while ten thousand times ten thousand voices from the surrounding heavens, and from the children of the planet, united in exclaiming, "Glory to the Spirit of the Bright Sun and to the Beautiful Star! The reign of evil is over, and that of good has begun. The old heavens are passed away, and behold! there are new heavens overhead." And methought that the spirit of the earth, too, was changed; that its materialism became divine; and that these three—the Spirit of the Earth, the Spirit of the Bright Sun, and the Spirit of the Beautiful Star—were now thoroughly one. It seemed also that instead of the trinity of elements of which the children of the planet had been, during the reign of the black orb, composed; namely, the planetary, or sensuous—the sunny, or divine—and the infernal, or false and malignant; that the last was extracted entirely, that the first was much modified and spiritualized, and that the planet's children were now composed entirely of refined and glorified sense, derived from the regenerated earth—true, wise, and holy spirit, derived from the Bright Sun—and pure love, breathed into them by the Beautiful Star. Of that perfected world I had only a glimpse, but it was a glorious one. I saw the happy children of the planet walking, working, singing, dancing, feasting, by turns; marrying and giving in marriage; yet pure as the angels of God: toil become work,—pleasure transfigured into celestial joy,—envy become generous emulation,—passion become free-going

energic power,—falsehood and concealment extinct,—every face clear and bright as a crystal wave,—the planet around them a smiling garden, where it was not a magnificent wilderness. Each morning shone the Bright Sun, no longer fitful and angry at times, but with his red ray evanished, and his power and mercy both increased. Each evening appeared, in its calm beauty, the Beautiful Star, so near and so bright, that it seemed to rest on the mountain-tops; that men lifted up their hands as if to touch it, and that the Spirit inhabiting it might be seen, at certain favoured states of the atmosphere, looking down with eyes of love on that planet which he had ransomed by such an unparalleled contest. No more vain inquiries why and how was that black and baleful orb produced, and why allowed so long to reign, and what has become of its votaries and victims; enough that the people of the planet, looking up, behold it no more in their sky—know themselves to be freed for ever from its power—and feel themselves more closely knit to their two glorious luminaries, because they once worshipped another, from whose dominion the Beautiful Star delivered them. While gazing at these happy beings in my mind's eye, like good old John Bunyan, "I wished myself among them." I wished still more, "Oh! that this were to be the destiny of *our* earth!" when a voice seemed to pass through me, sweet and strong as an organ-blast, "Be not faithless, but believing." And with that, like "the baseless fabric of a vision," the reverie passed, but HAS left something behind it.

CHAPTER IX.

FINALE, OR CLOSING "PROPHETIC STRAIN."

"Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain."
Il Penseroso.

It is singular to notice how many of our modern works, in poetry or in prose, infidel and Christian, blossom, ere they close, into some form or other of the anticipatory or prophetic. Shelley, for instance, closes both his "Queen Mab" and his "Prometheus Unbound" with long poetical prophecies about the future. Carlyle closes his "French Revolution" with a strain of mystical prediction. Isaac Taylor is continually prophesying. In short, you seldom find even a thoughtful novel, or a treatise on the Hebrew Bards, or a book of travels, or a volume of high and serious song, ending without a flight forward into the abyss of futurity—a flight in which you sometimes entirely lose sight of the adventurous aspirant, and seldom do more than catch glimpses of his white wing ploughing through the darkness. Why is this? Is it from a mere ambition?—or is it from the imitation of others?—or is it, rather, because our age is peculiarly the age of hope and expectancy, and may be fitly described as in that glorious picture in "Balder,"

"With backward streaming hair, and eyes of hasta,"

to be careering onward, not passively to meet, but actively to encounter its destinies? Hence poets aspire to be, as in old times, prophets. None of their separate predictions may, indeed, be considered infallible; but when many minds are

directed at once to the future, there is likely to be *some* portion of truth in their poetical vaticinations.

Let me, too, throw out (in addition to what I have hinted in the two preceding chapters), ere I close this volume, a very few half-poetic, half-prophetic anticipations.

And first, as to literature and poetry. We are nearing a point in which poetry shall have much to sing; and the great event generally begets the great singer, and "the large utterance of the early gods" wherewith to sing it. Think of the one theme of war, which many had thought exhausted! It has suddenly shot up into a Brobdignagian size, and has organized a machinery on a scale of magnificence of which even the oriental genius of the First Napoleon never dreamed. Men are now fighting the wars of the Titans over again: shells are flying like rocks, mortars like mountains, and the storms and tempests of fire let loose by man upon his fellows, almost vie with the tornadoes, the thunders, and the lightnings of Tropical nature. Never, too, did pathos, moral grandeur, disinterested affection, and the other scarce and difficult flowers sometimes found on the murky rocks of warfare, bloom more beautifully than in the present war. What a stern and silent fund of incidents and images these battles of Balaklava, Alma, Inkerman, and that gallant siege of Sebastopol have accumulated for the purposes of poets—were the poets but come! We are engaged in a war which resembles that of Troy in grandeur—which threatens to resemble it in length—and which, like that ten years' struggle, ere it close, may draw superior intelligences into its vortex, and become the Armageddon of the earth. May it not, like the Trojan war, be expected to produce a Homer and an Iliad? Undoubtedly its tendency is to infuse greater force, condensation, and manhood into the somewhat morbid, sickly and voluptuous poetry which at present abounds. Then, in the manifold phenomena of this "wondrous mother age"—its restless excitement, an excitement so great that it would sometimes seem as if, in man's mysterious composition, the brain and

nervous-system were becoming sole and supreme—fast budding into a higher organization—or else about to explode and to be extinguished; in its sudden revelation of enormous wealth, as if the earth were hurrying to display her most secret collection of treasure, and to open all her doors, that the race, ere too late, may enter in; in its rapid revolutions of opinion; in the railway-rate at which the powers of death and destruction themselves are going on ("*there are no death-beds now-a-days*"); and in its eager, *listening* attitude—there is much deserving, nay, demanding, the highest poetical treatment, whether didactically, or satirically, or dramatically, or lyrically. The discoveries, too, in astronomy, chemistry, and geology, while, as hinted before, casting little light upon the great questions connected with theology, are eminently adapted for the purposes of poetry. Before the First Advent of Christ, the voice of earthly song fell silent; before His Second, we expect it to revive in strains holier than the lyre of Amphion, more powerful than the hymnings of Orpheus, sweeter than the pipings of Arcadian shepherds,—comparable only to that music which, when earth first swam into the sky, welcomed the stranger, as the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

We have already denounced the false unity sought after, and said to be already found, in the universe, considered morally and religiously. But, in point of secular knowledge, there is a certain tendency to unity, which shall probably increase till a spectacle, thousands saw seven years ago in the heavens, shall find its antitype on earth. On a clear, starry, October night, in the year 1848, there began to stream up certain rills of electric light, not from the north merely, as usual, but simultaneously from north, south, east, and west, till meeting in the zenith, they seemed to pause, to mingle, and to form together a great, white quivering tent of light, covering the whole face of the sky, and under which it was an awful joy for men to stand and wondering to look up. So truth may soon be expected

more fully and irresistibly to break forth from every point, and to hurry on to some centrical meeting-place—to the formation of some wider, more complete, and more magnificent system. Till this happen, the encyclopædia of human knowledge will only be in scattered sheets, not bound in a goodly volume,—far less reduced to a brilliant essence.

We see a far more remarkable phenomenon beginning to manifest itself. Closer bonds are drawing all nations and every portion of society together, and must produce a greater unity of feeling and interest throughout the globe. Previous to the great discoveries and changes of this century, what insulation there was in the various countries of the world! What great gulphs, like the nine foldings of Styx,—such as diversity of language, vast interspaces of distance, commercial restrictions, religious prejudice, barbarian ignorance,—separated nation from nation! But how rapidly are these gulphs filling up, and how soon may we expect the sphere to be as thoroughly one, in many moral and intellectual respects, as it is in physical! Innumerable causes are, so to speak, drawing the bands of the globe more tightly together, and bringing it into narrower compass. Europeans have ridden in triumph through all the hundred-gated cities of barbaric tongues; commercial restrictions are melting away, like barriers of morning-mist before the rising sun; and religious castes and narrow creeds must follow. Ignorance is, as ashamed, hiding its face. Meanwhile, Steam and Electricity are wafting thought, and feeling, and opinion, and burning passion, with far more than the swiftness of the eagle's pinion, from the Indus to the Pole; from California to Japan. There is no disguising the fact,—the earth is *fast becoming one;* it is shrivelling up, like a palace reduced by the might of an Arabian magician, to the size of a shepherd's hut; it is, through various and resistless influences, *shrinking down* from a scene of wide unpeopled wastes, from a vast house of empty and unknown mansions, into a spot or dwelling, where all shall know all and everything within the earth's compass; where mountains

shall seem mole-hills; seas, little summer-pools; deserts, garden-walks of sand and gravel,—where, in the language of Scripture, "every island shall flee away, and the mountains be no longer found." Yes! shall we say?—this huge palace of the Evil one, "the god of this world," shall become a dwelling for the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep. For I cannot but see, in all this lessening of local distance; this unifying of the "great globe—the world;" this melting away of all old distinctions of clime, and caste, and country, and language; this spurning away of mountains, and licking up of oceans out of the path of human intercourse; the preparation of the earth as the seat of a universal monarchy. Such a government there must be; the question only is,—Shall the Good or the Evil Power take the kingdom? an Omniarch there must reign; the question is,—Shall it be Belial or Christ?—and that is a question which can only be decided by war—and that war appears begun.*

Of the times and the seasons—of the future events of this war—or of the particulars of that war of opinion with which it must be more or less mingled—and *when* it may be necessary for the Prince of the Kings of the Earth to interfere, I know nothing, and shall say nothing. I see, certainly, much in the present aspect of the times that is calculated to alarm the Christian and the lover of his race. This war *is* glorious, but it is perilous and bloody in the extreme; our religious atmosphere is dark and threatening. Personal piety and earnestness are low in every Church. The pulse of the Christian life is beating feebly; and this is a more appalling symptom than any connected with the spread of infidelity, or the increase of popery; our mechanical and missionary agencies are prosperous; but they are sustained by great effort; and there is, I fear, a vital coldness at the heart of many of their supporters. Iniquity, too, is abounding; and

* This was written ere the proposals for peace were issued. Most devoutly do we pray for peace, but have no hope of its being permanent.

because it abounds, as Christ predicted, the love of many is waxing cold. And how signally do our times exhibit that other sign He mentions of his approaching advent—"perplexity!"—"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; distress of nations, with perplexity." Perplexity about every subject, human and divine, temporal, moral, and spiritual; a perplexity often increasing with the advance of knowledge, and found in conjunction with the warmest piety; found in the camp of the Lord, and found without it,—is one of the most remarkable and most melancholy symptoms of the age; melancholy, were it not that, as the darkest hour precedes the dawning of the natural day, so, in the very depth of this perplexity, we see the prospect of clearer discovery and of coming help. And *therefore* I would desire myself, and would call on my Christian brethren to be of good cheer. The breaking of the day will come—"Thou, Eternal Providence, wilt make one day to dawn!"

In the book now completed, I have sought the following aims:—first, artistically, to secure variety of interest and effect, by the intermixture of varied matter,—including incident, portrait-painting, description of scenery, conversation with men of genius, personal reminiscences, &c.: secondly, to trace a rather peculiar course of experience, both in the literary and the clerical life, and record certain deductions from it, for the benefit of the young: and, thirdly, to lift up a voice of protest, however feeble, against the Materialisms, Pantheisms, Atheisms, and Deisms of our day; to attest my own deep-felt conviction in the main truths of our old faith; a conviction none the less valuable that it has not been received on hearsay, but has been bought—wrested, torn, inch by inch, from personal experience; and to declare my belief, too, in some doctrines not generally received among us,—such as the Personal Advent. On some of these topics, as I have before hinted,—

"There is matter for another rhyme,
And I thereto may add another tale,"

although in a different and more argumentative and elaborate shape. As to the charges of egotism, imprudent outspokenness, &c., which are likely to be brought against this narrative, I will not stay to do more than name and pass them by. Enough, that I have betrayed no confidence, slandered no private character; but have aimed—so far as a form in some degree and of necessity fictitious, has allowed me—to state the truth; to assign no characteristics to an author, a man, or a party, which I did not believe to be theirs; to put no speech into a man's mouth, of which the *sentiments*, if not the words or imagery, were not his; and to transcribe the history of myself, my opinions, adventures, &c., *in general*, from the daguerrotypic plates of memory. Whatever may be thought of the literary merits of the book,—if I find that it has contributed to strengthen the faith of one doubter, to cast the least gleam of light upon the path of one bewildered wanderer, to point one eye to the unrisen Sun of Christianity, or to show to one Nature, or Man-worshipper, the hopelessness lowering over his sad, although sunlit path,—I shall be happier and prouder than if all the critics in the world were united in attributing to it the character of eloquence, or talent, or genius.

THE END.

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